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**AFTER SUNSET COMES THE
DAWN**

BY

GUNTHER L. EICHHORN

TO DAVID AND SHARON

PREFACE

Imagine two people in Germany meeting on the street, shaking hands, and greeting each other with “Guten Tag,” a normal greeting suggesting normal times. Then imagine these same people, perhaps a year later, meeting again on the same street, but this time they both raise their arms skyward at a 45° angle and exclaim “Heil Hitler!” Grotesque, isn’t it? There are aspects of the most sinister places and times that, taken out of context, appear humorous. But only to the outsider looking in. There is no humor for the people doing it, who engage in this ludicrous act because they believe in it, believe in Hitler and his hatreds and make these hatreds their own. Or else they do it, though they don’t believe in it, but because not doing it is dangerous.

I lived in this topsy-turvy place, with its Heil Hitlers, from 1933 to 1938, as a child 6 to 11 years old. I have been encouraged to write about my life in those times by some who believe that what happened there should not be forgotten. Aware that others have written their stories, I write mine too, since everyone’s experience is different, and my perspective is not like that of anyone else.

I write about a period that was wholly abnormal in terms of what occurred both before and after, a period in which the abnormal impacted on virtually every human activity, but in which normal activities were pursued nonetheless and a sense of humor did help the victims to mitigate even the most outrageous cruelties perpetrated against them.

This is not a history of the Germans or the Jews, just that of a family that was caught in the events of that history. For the most part it is the story of me and my immediate family who lived as Jews under the Nazi yoke but were able to escape the worst horrors of that regime. In part of the narrative I compare our fate with that of other family members who were less fortunate and unable to elude the extremes of the holocaust. Some of them survived and others did not. They had reacted in different ways in their encounters with their oppressors, and these differences in behavior had much to do with the differences in the outcomes that followed.

Part I of these memoirs concerns what happened to us in the darkest days of the Third Reich. Part II contrasts that life with our experiences after our escape to the United States where people greeted us with “hello” or “how are you?” – the equivalent of “Guten Tag” – and the many other differences between the hated Nazis and the many good-natured Americans we met. If these are stereotypes – so be it – America did not need to be perfect to come out overwhelmingly better than the place where we had been. Of course I became aware of the astereotypical soon enough – and was sometimes hesitant to acknowledge it.

These pages are an account of my childhood as remembered many years thereafter. Goethe describes his memoirs as “Dichtung und Wahrheit,” which I interpret as “fiction and truth,” the latter being what is intended and the former what is sometimes unwittingly achieved.

Part II characterizes the new dawn I experienced in the New World after the metaphorical sunset I had witnessed in the Old.

Part III is presented as an addendum to describe what sort of morning was presaged by this dawn. Since my venture into early adulthood set me on course for my scientific career, Part III involves some allusions to scientific studies that are briefly explained for the nonscientist and sometimes only as required for an understanding of the broader narrative.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is common practice for authors to credit a spouse for having “put up with” less than civilized behavior attributed to the stress of writing and the time required for it. The gratitude that I owe my wife is considerably more substantial. Lotti typed (and retyped) the manuscript and made valuable suggestions throughout. It would be no exaggeration to say that without her help the work would not have been done.

I could not have written the significant section 8c of Part I without the help of my Dutch cousins, Rob, Margriet and Fred Hochheimer, especially Rob, who wrote a narrative for me, and James Loewenstein from Israel, who wrote me twice, the second time upon noting omissions in the original manuscript.

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PART I – SUNSET

LIFE (AND DEATH) IN NAZI GERMANY

1. Chameleon

The way to school in Frankfurt in the early years of Hitler's Germany was not a pleasant trip for a Jewish child. On rare occasions there was physical assault, but usually the "enemy" was satisfied with attacks on the mind, and we considered it lucky when we reached our destination, as we usually did, with nothing worse than a hurt ego. The "enemy" were the "Aryan" children, a designation that meant in our neighborhood simply that one wasn't Jewish and could therefore annoy those who were. In fact, an "Aryan" child was *expected* to harass his Jewish counterpart, and did so mainly by hurling invective, a host of obscenities and slurs, of which the most common was *Juddestinker*, *Judd* meaning Jew in the Frankfurt brogue. They enjoyed calling us all the other bad words too, but for some reason *Juddestinker* was by far the most popular, perhaps because it was easily made into chants. They would call us that over and over again, sometimes walking behind us, sometimes beside us, sometimes splitting up so that they were on both sides of us, providing a sort of guard as we progressed on our way.

This sort of accompaniment to going to school became such a regular occurrence that, after a while, we were no longer surprised by it, and became accustomed to it the way one becomes accustomed to unpleasantness that doesn't go away. We realized that we usually were not physically hurt, though on any given day the outcome was by no means certain, and we were never without fear. The "enemy" consisted of children we knew and those we did not know, and for the most part, after these many years, though what they did as a group remains vivid

enough, as individuals they are just a blur, an anonymous hateful blur, with faces not remembered.

There is one face, though, that I remember well. It was a long face, with the blue eyes and blond hair that was supposed to be the mark of an "Aryan", (though most "Aryans" I knew did not look like that). I remember his name: it was Rudi Bauer. The reason I remember him so well and he is not part of the blur is that he was the most enthusiastic, the most persistent, the most obnoxious of all the *Juddestinker* chanters. The others would do it or not do it - I suppose they sometimes had other things to do, or perhaps they did the same thing in different places. But Rudi Bauer was there every day, not only on the way to school, but also on the return home. *Juddestinker, Juddestinker, Juddestinker*, on and on, until his vocal cords gave out.

At times Rudi did interrupt the chant. When he did, it was generally to get a point across. "You listened to the Führer's speech last night, didn't you?" he said to me once. I said "no", and would have said more except that I couldn't because the loudest and wildest set of *Juddestinkers* erupted. Finally he stopped abruptly to ask:

"Why didn't you listen to the Führer?"

"Well, for one thing, I don't have a radio."

"Oh, the *Juddestinker* doesn't have a radio, *Juddestinker, Juddestinker.....*"

Rudi Bauer was my steady companion to and from school almost every day. I did not see him at any time other than on the way to school, until one day I found him at a most unexpected place.

I must have been about nine years old at the time, and I had a married cousin who lived

with her husband a few blocks from our home. They had a beautiful kitten with which I liked to play, but mainly I liked to visit them because they treated me so well and I always had a good time there. They did have a radio and I liked to listen to it (though not while the Führer was on, thus severely limiting the times available for listening). I enjoyed talking to them, and they seemed to like talking to me, and they did not treat me condescendingly, as many people treat a child. I had another cousin my own age who also liked to visit Elli, for the same reasons. Elli and her husband Jakob had no children of their own. They seemed to welcome other children, who in turn liked to come to them. It turned out that one of those children was Rudi Bauer.

I met him there, at Elli's one day. We were sitting in the living room, Elli and I, when the doorbell rang, and it was Rudi. I expected some sort of unpleasantness, or at least a prank, but instead Elli greeted him most courteously and he returned her greeting in the same way. He was introduced to me, and greeted me too with apparent pleasure, and made no sign that he had ever seen me before. I took the cue and said nothing about our daily routine. Rudi stayed about half an hour, and the three of us talked of various things that I don't remember, but I do remember that it all went as if among the best of friends, and there was never any allusion to the daily goings-on. After he left, I did tell Elli about the other Rudi that I knew so well, and she was quite surprised. I vaguely remember that she made some comment about the real Rudi being the one I just saw, and the other one doing what was expected of him.

At any rate, the day after I encountered Rudi at Elli's I found him again at my side on the way to school. How would he react now?

Juddestinker, Juddestinker, Juddestinker....

It did not take long to find out.

2. Birth and Early Memories

I believe that I was conceived in May, 1926, and was born approximately nine months afterward, on Feb. 8, 1927. I have absolutely no recollection of anything that happened between those times, but I presumably planned my birth date with consummate skill, since it was my mother's birthday, and the only other explanation for this coincidence would be that it *was* a coincidence, and who would believe that?

The place of my birth was Frankfurt am Main, Germany, a country that was then seething with unrest. There were constant disturbances by two radical groups opposed to the democratic regime as well as to each other. I did not know, of course, that one of these groups would win control of the country only six years later; otherwise I might have selected a more propitious place for my birth. But then again, I probably would not have, because my parents happened to reside in that place, and they were two of the nicest parents one could imagine.

My father, Fritz Eichhorn, was born in Richelsdorf, a small town in Hessen not far from the city of Eisenach in Thüringen. His birth year, 1888, coincided with the accession to the German imperial throne of Kaiser Friedrich – Fritz – whose relatively democratic views could just possibly have charted a different course for Germany had he lived, but he died in that same year. I suppose that my father was named after him because of the assumption that he would have been “good for the country” and “good for the Jews.”

To celebrate the joint birthdays of mother and son in 1927 my father bought a bouquet of

yellow tulips, which both recipients remembered well, although one of them only through frequent descriptions of the event. Since my father died when I was five years old, my memories of him are constrained, but what remains is of a loving and lovable father. He had been a sales representative for various shoe companies. I looked forward with great anticipation to his coming home from many business trips, possibly influenced to some extent by the very generous gifts that he always presented to me on his return. One time it was a toy violin that enabled me to demonstrate my aptitude for becoming a concert violinist by damaging the instrument not long after receiving it. One time it was a beautiful rocking horse; he said that nothing was too good for his *Buba*, which he called me, while I called him my *Baba*.

I was a small child (2½ kg at birth), and when someone pointed this out, my father is said to have commented that I would surprise everyone and become a boxer. Well, he turned out to be wrong about that, and I hope that he would not have been too disappointed over my choice of a somewhat different profession. He died before I understood the meaning of death, and I attempted to call him back by shouting from the window, expecting to have him appear on the street below in response to my call.

My mother was then left with a little boy possibly destined to become a boxer. I can have no objective opinion about her success in dealing with me, both before and after my father's demise, but I do know that I thought of her as the world's best mother. She was always there for me when I needed her, and at times when I thought that I didn't need her, realizing only much later that I needed her in those times more than ever.

My mother, Else Eichhorn née Weiss, was born on February 8, 1900, in a small town called Essingen, near Landau in the Bavarian Palatinate, close to the French border; on the other side of this border was the town of Wissembourg, or Weissenburg when Alsace-Lorraine was German, and the family Weiss is said to have been named after that town. Essingen was a typical village of farmers who owned land surrounding the village, on the European model. The farms in this case were vineyards, and in later years I would spend a week at harvest-time helping my grandparents, who owned one of the vineyards.

Thus, both my parents were raised in small villages, many miles apart, but my father had moved his business to Frankfurt before my parents' marriage in 1925, so that I grew up as a city boy and have retained an affinity for city life thereafter.

When I was 2 years old we moved from the "East End" of Frankfurt to the "West End", which I believe was considered to be moving up in the world. My childhood memories before my father's death are not extensive. My parents solved the baby-sitting problem by frequently taking me along to places of entertainment. They engaged in the European habit of frequenting cafés, where one could sit for hours nibbling on cake and sipping coffee. I remember the women who sold cigars and cigarettes from large boxes attached to a strap suspended from their necks so that their hands were free for transactions with customers like my father who was an eager cigar smoker. I believe that I usually behaved quite well in these cafés, being enthralled by what was going on. One time though I behaved quite badly in an outdoor café, where tables and chairs were standing on a surface covered with pebbles, and I apparently felt that these pebbles belonged in glasses on the table; I was summarily disabused of this notion.

My most interesting memory of events to which I was taken by my parents was of the time, in 1930, when we saw the new movie “Der blaue Engel” (The Blue Angel) that made Marlene Dietrich famous. The movie made little impression on my 3-year-old mind; my memory was of doors opening and closing. Obviously there was more to it for adults, and when my parents asked me to tell visitors what movie I had seen, and I exclaimed in a loud voice “Der Blaue Engel” there was much laughter, which I could appreciate much later when I saw the movie with somewhat greater understanding.

One time my parents did use a baby-sitter in the person of my Aunt Palmir, when they saw an operetta “Das Weiße Rössl” by Ralph Benatsky in the Opera House, which was just across the street from my aunt’s apartment. This operetta contained quite a few very hummable melodies, and I became familiar with them when, several years later, my mother presented me with some records while I was in bed with the measles.

I was my parents’ only child, and I had a cousin Margot who was the only child of my Aunt Hilda and Uncle Adolf. Our two families always lived very close to each other, and Margot and I grew up somewhat like brother and sister.

My early childhood included many trips between Frankfurt and Essingen. We were generally transported between these two locations by my bachelor Uncle Erich, who often took us to my maternal grandparents (Bernhard and Helene Weiss) during my father’s absence on business trips. We frequently visited my paternal grandmother (Helene Eichhorn) who lived in

Bad Homburg, not far from Frankfurt, with her daughter Lina and husband James Löwenstein, and the latter's children, Kurt and Sitti. My father's last picture was taken in Bad Homburg with my mother and me. It was a very bad picture of my father, but my mother had it enlarged because she assumed that I remembered him as he appeared in that picture. Some years later my mother ascertained that my father's image on my parents' wedding picture was at least as satisfactory for my memory of him, and an enlargement of that picture then replaced the one taken in Bad Homburg.

3. Jews and Aryans Together

There are certain critical dates that become part of a collective memory because they have such an extraordinary effect on our lives. In the U.S. two such dates are Dec. 7, 1941, and Sept. 11, 2001. The date on which Adolf Hitler became German chancellor was January 30, 1933, and this date has none of the significance in Germany that the cited dates have in the U.S., since Germans fortunately do not commemorate Hitler's accession to power. Yet this day was impregnated into my 6-year old memory as a very dark day, on which there was a family gathering in the living room of our apartment, where a great deal of somber discussion took place. I did not participate in this discussion. I was too young to understand the potential impact of the Nazi takeover, but my family knew there would be unfortunate consequences for us Jews, although the exact nature and the full extent of these consequences could hardly be anticipated. But the hatred of the Nazis for the Jews was well known.

My first school day came only a short time after Hitler's rise to power, and the significance of that event was then driven home to me day by day. Not that every event in my life was related to the Nazis. On that first day my mother took me to the public school in our district, the *Holzhausenschule*, where we joined the other mothers and their children who were slated for Herr Reinbold's class. As I discovered later, getting into this class was a stroke of luck, since Herr Reinbold was no Nazi. On this day he attempted to relax the children by opening a box of colored chalk and asking for volunteers to come to the board and to display their artistic capabilities by drawing a red car, green car, etc. No future Rembrandts being in evidence, my mother pressed me to show what I could do, assuring me that it would be better than the works

created on the board up to that time, but mother's shy child was in no mood for this and thus my first opportunity to exhibit my skills in this area was lost. My later efforts along this line proved how insignificant the loss really was.

At that time the Jewish boys (girls were in separate classes) continued to attend class together with the "Aryans." Herr Reinbold treated us all alike. The system, though, treated us differently, as the Aryan boys came dressed in their H.J. (Hitler Youth) uniforms, and those not so attired were therefore readily identified as Jews. What the H.J. learned outside the classroom was not designed to make them cherish Jewish children, as demonstrated by the "Chameleon." Herr Reinbold had no influence on curriculum but was required to follow it, and our reading matter consisted of a great deal of Nazi propaganda. But the effect of this propaganda was indeed mitigated somewhat by Herr Reinbold. I remember, for example, one time when our class was supplied with material recounting Hitler's life. Each boy would read one paragraph, but suddenly Herr Reinbold stopped the boy whose turn it was, in mid-paragraph, and asked us to finish the article at home. There I realized that this wonderful teacher had kept us from reading Hitler's diatribes against the Jews in class. Unable to prevent the class from seeing this material altogether, he did the best he could to keep the Jewish children from being embarrassed during class. Compassion for Jews was no virtue in Nazi Germany, and Herr Reinbold was taking the risk of being denounced to the authorities by a Hitler Youth boy. I can only hope that this good man was able to survive, in spite of his humane behavior.

To make way for the introduction of the Nazi propaganda into the children's curriculum, other things had to go. Sometimes they went abruptly; sometimes there was a phased withdrawal.

An example of the latter occurred with the very popular song “Die Lorelei” which was based on a poem by the 19th century poet Heinrich Heine (who was born Jewish, had himself baptized for political reasons, but was still considered Jewish by the Nazis). Since the poem was so well known and popular, the first phase of the withdrawal consisted of identifying the author as “unknown.” Since this unknown author was nevertheless known to many Germans, the second phase followed soon, and the poem disappeared from the books.

We learned two ways of writing the alphabet, the Roman (Latin) script, as well as the strictly German script, derived from the Roman and called Sütterlin. Similarly, we learned a Roman and German (Gothic) alphabet for reading, the latter being a somewhat rococo version of the former. Progress in the Nazi sense would involve the gradual elimination of the Roman forms in line with the emphasis on everything German. “Foreign” words were discouraged; *Trottoir* (derived from French, meaning sidewalk) was banned in favor of *Fußweg* (foot path) and the politically correct version of *Telefon* was *Fernsprecher*. (The practices were reversed after 1945, and Sütterlin and “Gothic” print are now obsolete in Germany.)

My luck with my home-room teacher, Herr Reinbold, did not extend to the gym teacher. Herr Lukas was a thoroughgoing Nazi with no ambiguities whatsoever. At the beginning of my first school-year gym consisted of exercises on gym equipment – up ladders, down ladders; up poles, down poles, up ropes, down ropes. As the year progressed up-and-down became back and forth, because the gym period was taken up almost entirely by marching across the school yard, forward march, to the right, to the left march, backward, at right angles, 45° angles, at various tempos, with sudden stops, all-in-all rather advanced marching maneuvers for 6-year olds. But

Herr Lukas was training the children to conquer Europe for Hitler, and woe to any who misstepped or who he believed had misstepped! I must have been fairly good at my soldiering, because I never received direct punishment from our tormentor, but once the tail end of a blow administered to the boy to my right glanced off my cheek, and I felt it long after it had been delivered. The boy was told that if all Germans were like him, the Führer would never conquer France. This, in 1933. One time, just after we had lined up in formation, a Jewish boy arrived late, leading Herr Lukas to antisemitic invective for most of the rest of the gym period, thus possibly postponing the Führer's conquest of France.

We did not march in silence. We sang. We sang "Deutschland über Alles" (Germany above all) and the Horst-Wessel Lied, a song honoring a slain Nazi street-brawler who had been set up as a martyr of the Nazi cause. The two songs in tandem had become the national anthem, and we sang them over and over, and I learned the words of the despicable Horst-Wessel song well enough that I still remember them after so many years. No Frère Jacques for us!

Our mathematics teacher was a Herr Albrecht, who was Jewish. Yes, a Jew was teaching Hitler Youth boys at the beginning of the Nazi era! Such paradoxes existed because not everything could be changed at once. Even more incredible was the teaching of the Jewish religion. Before the Nazi period German schools set aside a time for religious study, when Protestant (Lutheran), Catholic, and Jewish children were taught by appropriate teachers in separate classrooms. The practice continued in the earliest Nazi period, before the Nazi organization could eliminate it.

Indeed, the earliest Nazi period was full of paradoxical situations. While antisemitic propaganda was being infused into the educational system, the twenty-or-so teachers of the school marched in one straight line across the school yard during recess, with Herr Reinbold, Herr Lukas and Herr Albrecht all part of the line. Though I never saw Herr Lukas and Herr Albrecht next to each other, they were marching in that same line nevertheless. Well, this togetherness did not last long. One day the Jewish children were removed from Herr Reinbold's classroom, and placed into another room, where henceforth they were taught by Herr Flörsheim, a Jewish teacher.

Of course, this segregation was only another temporary solution to the Jewish problem. The Nazis would implement more permanent solutions later.

4. Jews and Aryans Apart

My discovery of the chameleon character of Rudi Bauer was an accident. If there were other chameleons to be discovered, I did not discover them. My encounters with Aryan children were almost invariably unpleasant, as they had to be, considering what the Aryan children were taught. On no other occasion did I observe the kind of metamorphosis that occurred on my visit to Elli.

The Aryan child was inundated with images that demonized the Jews. The indoctrination by the Hitler Youth movement was perhaps most important, but the denunciation of the Jews was everywhere. Placards on stores: No Jew Permitted. Headlines in the newspapers: The Jewish Enemy. Jews were not allowed in parks, swimming pools, cafés. It didn't all happen at once. At the time I left Germany there were still some stores where we could buy and some parks where we could walk. The prohibitions occurred one by one, in stages. I do not know whether these prohibitions occurred according to some plan or whether they were simply random. When I started to learn to swim, I went to the Rothschildbad, founded by the Rothschild family. When this facility was denied us, we went to the Brentanobad, and, finally, only one place remained for Jews to swim: a section of the Main River, a brown mixture of liquid and solids – my main memory is of the dead fish that shared the facility with us. But I was lucky that I was able to leave Germany before everything was taken from us, including, of course, eventually life itself.

5. Philanthropin

In the German educational system, a child reached a fork in the educational path upon completion of the fourth grade. I could have continued four more years in the Holzhausenschule, the public school, or Volksschule (that is, assuming that normal circumstances had prevailed). The other choice was to go to a Gymnasium or Realschule, schools of higher education that began in Grade 5 and ended with the completion of the 12th Grade. But this latter choice was not available to everyone. It was limited to those who could pass a required examination and whose parents could afford the tuition.

The Gymnasium tended towards the classics, the Realschule towards science, but the two types of schools overlapped greatly in their curriculum. In the early phases of these studies the students were of an age at which Americans pass through the end of elementary school and then middle school or junior high school. But while American students would spend time on comprehensive studies (general science, social studies), German students would begin specialized courses, so that the structure of the curriculum, though of course not its content, remained similar throughout the years from 5th to 12th grade. The advantages and disadvantages of these practices can lead to discussions encompassing many of the controversies of educational philosophy.

The Philanthropin was actually a Realgymnasium, a hybrid in which the classical and the “scientific” received an emphasis intermediate to its prominence in the more extreme school types.

The most important characteristic, though, of the Philanthropin was that it was a Jewish school, and in its history this school mirrored that of the Jewish community of Frankfurt in the 19th and 20th centuries. It was founded in 1804 during the Napoleonic era, during which the Jews of Frankfurt along with European Jews generally were emerging from their isolated ghetto existence with its education confined to studies of Torah and Talmud. The Philanthropin set out to provide Jewish children with a secular education that would prepare them for citizenship in the general community. Ironically, the school that was founded when Jews were obtaining their civil rights was disbanded when these rights were taken away.

I attended the Philanthropin from April, 1937, until February, 1938, just prior to my family's emigration to the U.S. The school was the more liberal of the Jewish schools in Frankfurt, and some felt that in the effort to imitate the non-Jewish schools, it was "assimilating" to them and abandoning the Jewish heritage. For that reason the Samuel Raphael Hirsch School was founded for those who desired a more Orthodox Jewish education. If the Philanthropin had ever been "assimilationist," I did not find it so while I was there. That may have been my perspective due to my liberal religious background. Of course, assimilation was neither possible nor desirable for Jews during the Nazi regime. The more Jews were labeled as inferior, the greater their affinity for their cultural heritage became, and this attachment to things Jewish was reflected in even the "secular" curriculum of the school.

My own experience exposed me to only the first year of the school's curriculum, and I remember it quite well because of the rather outstanding teachers who remain fixed in my memory. Many of the teachers had Ph.D.'s and/or titles such as Studienrat or Oberstudienrat in

the time-honored German tradition. (A letter to the principal would be addressed to *Herrn Oberstudienrat Direktor Dr. A. Hirsch.*)

My home room teacher at the Philanthropin was Herr (Studienrat) Narewczewitz, a strict disciplinarian, who introduced us on the first day to the dreaded *Tadel*-book on his desk. He explained that misbehavior on the part of any student would lead to the inscription of a *Tadel* (demerit), and that three *Tadels* would lead to expulsion. In addition to registering *Tadels*, Herr Narewczewitz taught us mathematics and geography, and he did so with distinction. The first geography lesson consisted of diagraming our classroom, the next of a map of the school, then – in stages – the city of Frankfurt and then larger districts of which Frankfurt was a part, and then of other regions of Germany. I understood that by the time we would graduate from the school we would have covered all parts of the planet in great detail.

German and history were taught by Dr. Marbach. In German he taught grammar and composition, as well as some literature – he particularly liked Goethe, and I heard that he was a dedicated Goethe scholar. In his contribution to my book of autographs – my mother mandated that I collect these from my teachers – he quoted Goethe:

Wer mit dem Leben spielt	He who plays with life
Kommt nie zurecht;	Will not succeed;
Wer sich nicht selbst befiehlt	He who can't rule himself
Bleibt immer ein Knecht.	Remains always a slave.

This aphorism suited Dr. Marbach well. Immaculately dressed in vested suits, his lectures

were well thought-out and worthy of more advanced students than our 5th grade.

He also taught us history. In the general scheme of the Philanthropin curriculum, we started with what was close, the city of Frankfurt – and eventually would cover German history, and then go on from there. What was mostly discussed about Frankfurt history was the history of the Jews who lived there, and, most particularly, the story of Meyer Anselm Rothschild, the founder of the financial empire that would spread the fame of the Rothschilds throughout the world. Thus, the history of Frankfurt became the framework for discussing what really amounted to modern Jewish history.

Dr. Philipp taught Jewish history of a time somewhat more remote. The name of this course was “religion,” but what I remember of it is mainly stories from the Bible told with great enthusiasm and with a flair for the dramatic.

The selection of languages – Hebrew and English – reflected the times in which we lived, since Germany’s Jews were attempting to leave the country and most of them were preparing to go to Palestine or to the U.S. The teaching of English in the Sexta, as the 5th grade was called, constituted a switch, since French had previously been the first foreign language. It was taught with an emphasis on correct pronunciation; hence we spent perhaps three months reading English using a phonetic alphabet (e.g. θ and ð for the two pronunciations of th), so that we would be confronted with the non-phonetic English spelling only after having learned English pronunciation without the distraction of its peculiar spelling. Herr Felsen, our teacher, who was, incidentally, studying for his PhD, considered pronunciation of the essence.

Hebrew was taught by Alfred Speyer, and had two purposes. The first was religious, to prepare the student for the Hebrew liturgy, and the second was practical, to prepare us for the possible use of the language after emigration to Palestine. For these two different purposes we were taught two different pronunciations, the Ashkenazic for liturgy, and the Sephardic for the spoken language. Ashkenazic had been the usage in the synagogues of the Ashkenazim, the German and Eastern European Jews, whereas Sephardic was similarly used by Jews in Spain and elsewhere in Southern Europe. The Sephardic pronunciation, which differs really very little from the Ashkenazic, was adopted as the spoken language by Ashkenazim who emigrated to Palestine; to some this was a way of restricting to prayer the use of what they considered the Holy Tongue and avoiding its use for secular purposes. The Sephardic Hebrew became known as Ivrit, while the Ashkenazic continued to be known as Hebräisch (Hebrew), and not Ivris. Interestingly, the Sephardic pronunciation became current in the synagogues of Israel and eventually elsewhere, so that the distinction between the religious and the secular language was abandoned.

We also had courses in biology, music and art, taught by specialists. All in all, the structure of education (but of course not the level of instruction) in the 5th grade was more akin to that in high school rather than grade school in the U.S. I should point out here that my knowledge of the German educational system of the time is limited and based primarily on my own experiences and hearsay many years ago and therefore subject to lapses of memory as well.

My departure from the Philanthropin was marked by a celebration which included some

sort of performance. I have no memory of the event, but our family archives contain a poem that I presented there, in which I thank Dr. Philipp for coaching my fellow students. The poem does not appear to be beyond my capabilities at the time, but I suspect that it was composed by either my mother or my Uncle Erich. The poem was dated February 22, 1938, presumably the date of the celebration.

How fortunate for me that I could have this celebration which portended my departure from Germany! How unfortunate for Dr. Philipp and the other teachers that they remained. The Philanthropin as I knew it ceased to exist after Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938. Shortly after that night Drs. Philipp and Marbach were arrested and taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp (near Weimar, the location where Dr. Marbach's beloved Goethe produced his major works). Both died as a consequence of their treatment there. The Philanthropin lingered on until 1942 when other teachers were deported to other concentration camps. A book that chronicles the history of the Philanthropin contains a page of pictures of some of my teachers who were dragged away from the profession that they performed so well. Looking at the pictures of my teachers Marbach, Philipp, Narewczewitz, and Speyer gives me great pain. The pictures portray them as I remember them and I am reminded of the respect I had for them, as I consider the fate that was theirs. Some members of the Philanthropin faculty apparently did survive. I know definitely only about the Director, Dr. Hirsch, with whom I had some correspondence after my emigration to the U.S. I have one communication from Frankfurt, Oct. 10, 1938, and another eight years later from Buena Vista College, Storm Lake, Iowa, where he had become a language instructor.

I can attest to the survival of many of the Philanthropin students, since about 200 of them attended a reunion of the school in the Catskills in November, 1991. Remarkably, five of the students from my 1937-8 class found their way there. Of course, these five represent only those who came to the U.S., and obviously not even all of them, since not everyone could be expected to be able or willing to attend. And of course some of the students had emigrated to other countries. I do not remember the size of my class at the Philanthropin, but I estimate that it may have been approximately 25; if this estimate is correct, some 20% of this class was at this reunion in the U.S. 53 years after I left the school.

6. The Synagogue

I was born to a family that was conservative in personal habits and liberal in politics and religious affiliation. I don't know for which of the many political parties my family voted before the Nazi takeover. But as for liberalism in Jewish matters, I was sent to the Philanthropin, not the Orthodox Samson R. Hirsch School. Our synagogue was the Westendsynagoge, one of the two Liberal Synagogues in the city, and in fact the more liberal of the two.

The two Liberal Synagogues – the Hauptsynagoge was the other one – shared three rabbis and two cantors. The rabbis were old, middle-aged, and young. Rabbi Dr. Seligmann, the oldest, had written a prayer book in two parts in 1904 (at least that date is given for Part II (for the High Holidays) – I have no copy of Part I, but assume a date around the same time). The service was mainly in German, with relatively little Hebrew. We have copies of a second edition of Part I, written in 1928 and a third edition of Part II, written in 1926 (yes, the dates are correct), both also by Dr. Seligmann, and by that time there was much less German and very much Hebrew. This second edition was in use during the time of my attendance at the synagogue.

I remember Dr. Seligmann mainly for his talk to the children on the eve of Simchat Torah. It always started “Ich will Euch ein Märchen erzählen.” – I want to tell you a fairy tale. And he proceeded to do that, and produced the highlight of the year for us children. Dr. Salzberger was the middle-aged rabbi – his manner very serious, the servant of God, the quintessential rabbi according to my child's stereotyped conception. The youngest rabbi, Dr. Lemle, made the greatest impression on me. His sermons were delivered in a highly modulated oratorical style, with *pianos* and *fortissimos*, and it was the latter that most frightened me,

because they promised doom to one biblical Nazi surrogate after another, from Sabbath to Sabbath. Knowing that the Gestapo was ubiquitous and assuming they could be patrolling the synagogue, I was horrified by the possibility that someone would come forward to arrest Dr. Lemle. Fortunately it never happened; perhaps the Gestapo ignored us, or did not understand the Rabbi's allusions.

One of the Lemle sermons – somewhat different from the biblical allegories – has stuck in my memory. In it he discussed a letter that he had received from a previous member of the congregation, who had emigrated to Brazil. He quoted the young man, who had written what *wir jungen Brasilianer* – we young Brazilians – were doing, and he kept repeating the phrase in his resounding voice, *fortissimo* indeed. He was berating the man for so quickly converting himself into a Brazilian in the same way that his parents or grandparents had converted themselves into Germans, when all the time he and they had really been Jews. Yes, “assimilation” was not admired at that time, when Germany did not consider Jews to be Germans, and how could one be sure that the time would not come when Brazilians did not want Jews to be Brazilian? Incidentally, it was evident that Dr. Lemle did not consider Liberal Judaism to be assimilation, either as expressed in the Westendsynagoge, or in the Philanthropin, where he served on the faculty.

Many years later, on a flight from Washington to Rio de Janeiro, I sat next to a gentleman who informed me that Dr. Lemle was the Rabbi of the largest congregation in Rio, and I wondered whether he then considered himself to be a Brazilian. I expect that he did, and did not consider that in conflict with his being a Jew. Brazil in the 1980s was just not Germany in the

1930s, and none of us anywhere in the 1980s were what we were in the 1930s.

The service at the Westendsynagoge was conducted by one of the three rabbis, one of the two cantors and a choir that was positioned in a choir loft. Both Cantors Fleischmann and Scheuermann were excellent musicians; the choir was originally composed of members of the Frankfurt opera chorus. While that was no longer possible during my attendance at the synagogue, the choir still provided outstanding musical accompaniment for the service. Since my family attended services virtually every Friday evening and Saturday morning, as well as on all holidays and semi-holidays, I became very familiar with the melodies of the Westendsynagoge and remember many of them to this day.

The service differed from an orthodox one in many respects, such as the abbreviation of the liturgy, the presence of the choir, the absence of a centrally located pulpit. Women sat separately from the men, but instead of the men seated downstairs and the women in the balcony, the segregation was horizontal, women on the left and men on the right. As in an orthodox service, seven men (but not women) were called up for the Torah reading, which was, however, thoroughly abbreviated, only parts of each weekly portion being read on each Sabbath.

I learned the Hebrew alphabet and the reading of Hebrew for liturgical purposes in a class taught by Cantor Scheuermann. The Hebrew was taught to make us able to follow the service and to participate in it, and not as a living language, and we did not translate it into German. To understand the prayers we referred to the translation in the prayer book that accompanied every Hebrew passage. Later on, in the Philanthropin, I studied Hebrew as a

language to speak, a living language.

The Sabbath morning service in the Westendsynagoge was followed by an Oneg Shabbat for the children. Each child would go to a room allotted to a group of similar sex and age. The proceedings then would be led by an adult with some kind of ability to lead a group of youngsters in activities that were attractive to them and educational as well. My group was extremely lucky, because our mentor was a well-known star of a children's radio program, and she frequently regaled us with material from her program, which we children greatly enjoyed. Most of the time the fun and games were of a kind that would teach us about Jewish culture; we did much singing of Hebrew songs. Many of these songs were Zionist songs, and much of the Jewish culture was about Palestine, the place that we hoped would become a Jewish homeland, where one could escape from the Nazis.

Zionism was an important part of the Jewish answer to National Socialism; it gave us a sense of worth that the Nazis were doing their best to take away from us. Like many Jewish children I belonged to a Labor Zionist youth group, the Habonim, where we were taught about the work that Jewish pioneers were accomplishing in Palestine. The only kind of movie that I remember seeing in my childhood in Germany was the Palästina-film. A typical movie of this kind would begin by showing a university professor teaching his students in Germany, attired in vested suit and tie, and then switch to a Kibbutz in Palestine, where this professor was now depicted in casual attire while driving a tractor and thus helping to reclaim the land from the desert. At sunset the professor could be seen dancing the *hora* with his fellow workers, celebrating a good day's work well done. The Palästina-film was our view of what we hoped was

our future and removed us for a short time from the dreadful present.

The Westendsynagoge shared the fate of synagogues throughout Germany on Kristallnacht. I believe that the walls of the synagogue were sturdy enough to withstand the conflagration but the interior was completely demolished. After World War II it was rebuilt by the Germans according to the original specifications, with the exception of whatever changes were required to accommodate the needs of the Orthodox East European Jews who then settled in Frankfurt. These Jews responded to the hospitality of post-war Germany to immigrants of diverse ethnicities that ironically included many Jews.

7. The Family

In the unpleasant and dangerous political climate to which German Jews were subjected during this time, the daily functions of living went on, not always affected by the unfavorable environment, though almost every facet of life was impacted in some way by what was happening in this sordid world. We kept on eating, though there was no certainty how long we could pay for food. We kept on sleeping, in spite of the many worries. My lack of years and knowledge made me unaware of romantic love and sex, but it must have occurred, since babies were born. Our human values were bolstered by school and synagogue, but other contacts with the outside world bespoke of the wretchedness of our life. Every Jew wished to get away from this miserable place, and some did, eventually, and others didn't. Meanwhile life meant doing the best that was possible.

At the time of my father's death, my mother had two sisters living in Frankfurt. One was my Aunt Palmir (Markus), whose husband Joseph had given his life for country and Kaiser on the Russian front in World War I. He had been successful in an export-import business that led him to communicate with people in various parts of the globe. In this business he accumulated stamps which my uncle and then I inherited, thus inducing an interest in philately in both of us. The Markuses had two daughters. The elder was Elli who was married to Jakob Flörsheimer, and at whose home I met the "chameleon." The younger was Edith, who lived with her mother while in Frankfurt. The Markus home was across from the opera house; so I could stay with Aunt Palmir while my parents attended the opera.

My mother's other sister, living in Frankfurt, was my Aunt Hilda, who was married to

Adolf Preis, who did not enjoy sharing a first name with the Führer, but his parents could not have anticipated that. (The Adolf was changed to Adolph when he became a U.S. citizen.) They had a daughter Margot, and our two mothers managed always to live very close to each other, so that Margot and I grew up virtually as brother and sister. Early on we were taught to share things. I remember particularly the errands that the two of us made to the *Drogerie Henkel* (drug store), where Herr Henkel would hand us some little gift, like a lollipop, and whoever got it gave half of it to the other, which was not always easy to do, if, for example, it was a lollipop. When Herr Henkel got wind of our division of spoils, he began to give us two lollipops to make the division easier.

My mother's third sibling, her brother Erich, lived in Essingen with my maternal grandparents, but commuted frequently to Frankfurt to help Aunt Palmir in 1918, after her husband's death, and to help my mother, in 1932, after my father's death. He had served four years in the German army during World War I and had taken part in the Battle of the Somme, among others.

My grandparents' vineyard was about half a mile from their house in Essingen, and I remember that Margot and I went to Essingen, in the fall of my first school year to help to harvest the grapes. I was very proud to walk along the rows of vines and to fill my little pail with grapes, which I deposited at the end of each row into a vat secured to the back of a man who walked up and down a path perpendicular to the rows, and who in turn deposited his load into barrels on a horse-drawn carriage that would bring the grapes to my grandparents' house. At the house the grape juice was extracted in a large press and not by our feet, as popular lore would

have it.

My grandparents were then no longer living in Essingen; they and Uncle Erich had moved to Frankfurt soon after my father's death. My mother and I moved into a larger apartment in Frankfurt that would also accommodate my grandparents and Uncle Erich. Essingen would have become even more unbearable than Frankfurt after the Nazis took over, since everyone there knew everyone else, and the Jews were therefore even more a focal point of unwanted attention. My grandparents' belongings in Essingen, the vineyard and the house with virtually everything in it, were sold in 1936, obviously for a pittance, since everyone knew that my grandparents had no future there.

Thus, during the early Nazi time, our household at Reuterweg 55 in Frankfurt included my maternal grandparents and Uncle Erich, along with my mother and me. Aunt Palmir and Edith had moved into an apartment above us at the Reuterweg address, while Margot and her parents, and Elli and her husband, occupied two other apartments only several blocks away from us.

My grandfather was in poor physical condition when he arrived in Frankfurt and he died in 1936. My grandmother overcame a serious illness and remained a pillar of strength for many years. My mother wore only black clothing for at least a year after my father's death, and, in a country where the roles of mother and father were practically codified, my mother assumed the duties of both parents with a great deal of dedication and strength. My mother's son had a tendency to shyness, and liked to stay in the house and to read, so that my mother, though not

displeased with my incipient scholarly behavior, realized that she needed to stress my physical and social development, and through her efforts I did participate in some of the activities in which other children were more instinctively engaged.

My uncle Erich took Margot and me on long walks that provided not only physical activity but also an understanding of the things we encountered, the flora and fauna of nature when we were in the forest, and the historical, architectural and manufacturing characteristics of what could be observed in the city. My uncle was a well-read and intellectually stimulating man to whom the circumstances of life had denied the education from which he could have greatly benefitted.

I believe that my family was very religious, although they would have denied the implication, since they were not orthodox, and religious meant orthodox to them. They were not orthodox, because they did not go to an orthodox synagogue, on the Sabbath they turned electric lights on and off and used the telephone, they recognized no boundary to their Saturday afternoon walks, etc. On the other hand, they kept a strictly kosher home, they did not miss a Friday evening or Saturday morning service, or any service during the Jewish Festivals and Holy Days, and on weekdays the women of the family said their morning, afternoon and evening prayers at home (in Hebrew), and also the prayers written (in German) especially for women who were not particularly expected to say the Hebrew prayers that were really the province of the men. They did not ride in a vehicle or write on paper on the Sabbath, and were careful not to tear paper on that day. The latter injunction proved a bit of a problem to my family when an important letter would arrive on the Sabbath. They then invoked the principle that opening an

envelope along the gummed edges without tearing was permissible, and when the inevitable tear did occur, it had of course not been intended and produced a sigh of displeasure before the letter was removed from the envelope.

8. To Be or Not to Be

All Jews realized it eventually, some earlier than others: Jewish life in Nazi Germany was doomed. It took time for this realization to sink in. After all, Nazi behavior was so ridiculous and incompatible with the norms of civilization that it seemed improbable for it to endure long enough to cause much harm. As the years passed, and the Nazis remained, and more and more harm was done, more and more Jews realized that they would *not* survive if they remained in Germany. Survival meant getting out.

The story of the holocaust is one of extermination. The Wannsee Conference had decreed the death of eleven million Jews. By the end of World War II six million had died. But five million lived. So the story of the holocaust is also one of survival.

Who would live and who would die? To live meant to escape, or to hide and survive, or to be spared by the war's end. To die was the fate of all the rest.

My family, those who lived in Frankfurt, and in Richelsdorf and in Bad Homburg, illustrated all of these possibilities.

a. Survival through Legal Escape

My own immediate family, after my father's death, consisted of my mother, maternal grandparents, Uncle Erich and me. Our livelihood depended upon savings whose magnitude I did not know, and my uncle's earnings that declined steadily as the firms he represented severed connections with Jewish personnel.

By 1936 the family discarded whatever hope there had been for the collapse of the Nazis and began the difficult and prolonged process of emigration. All our planning included my cousin Margot and her parents. My grandfather's death early in that year had reduced our household to four, so that we were seeking asylum for seven people altogether.

Our thoughts turned to "America," where we had quite a number of relatives who had come to the U.S. long before the Nazi period. At the time two laws severely restricted immigration into the U.S. In 1924 an act had been passed that promoted a quota system based on the ethnic make-up of the U.S. in 1890, and the National Origins Act of 1929 confirmed this system, and also limited the annual immigration to 150,000 and in addition stipulated that no-one could enter the U.S. who would become a charge to the government. This latter requirement made it necessary to obtain an affidavit from someone who would assume financial responsibility for the new immigrants so that they could not constitute a financial burden to the state.

One of our American relatives, my mother's cousin Louis Mann, was a well-known rabbi and also well-to-do, just the sort of individual, we thought, who could provide such an affidavit. He informed us, however, that he could not undertake to serve as guarantor for seven people --

he could make an affidavit for Uncle Erich, who in turn would supposedly send for the rest of us after he had established himself in the U.S. That scheme would have conferred the death sentence upon six of us, had we not been able to find an alternative way to gain entry into the U.S. Our cousin did suggest an alternative in a letter to my grandmother's brother Dr. Bertram Mayer, who was a retired chemist and had been a Vice President of CIBA in Switzerland. Uncle Bertram could send him the sum of \$10,000, and with this money he could then help us by providing the affidavit. Some variation of this proposal was in fact adopted. Uncle Bertram set up a \$10,000 trust fund for our use, and this money was available to us when we arrived in Louisville, our U.S. destination. My family fully replaced the withdrawals initially made from this trust fund, so that saving our lives did not turn out to be such an expensive undertaking. I am not certain who the U.S. citizen was who signed the affidavit – whether it was in fact the aforementioned cousin, or someone else. My cousin Margot tells me that her father's brother signed for the Preis family. At any rate, Uncle Bertram, his wife Johanna and son Robert are credited by our family with saving our lives by furnishing the trust fund, which was a vast sum of money for us in 1938. Robert met us on our way to the U.S. to provide us with a much smaller sum for our travel requirements to supplement the 10 German marks each person was permitted to convey across the border.

Incidentally, after our family's arrival in the U.S. we had a very cordial relationship with cousin Louis and his family.

Our affidavit and the trust fund upon which it was based did not by any means lead to our immediate emigration to the U.S. Under the 1924 and 1929 laws we were subject to the German

quota, which was actually of benefit to us since that quota was relatively high, but we were nevertheless subject to the severe limit on the rate of immigration. To prevent that rate from exceeding the legal limit, every individual was given a number in order of the receipt of the visa application and our number did not come up until the beginning of 1938.

Meanwhile, we also had to contend with papers issued by the German government. Of course, each of us needed a German passport, which at that time was obtainable, since the Germans had not yet perfected their efficient machinery of death, and were quite willing to get rid of the Jews through emigration. Passports were validated for a specific time, and required renewal upon expiration. The difficulty with these renewals as well as with any German papers was that such matters required confrontation between a Jew and a Nazi official, and that was not a pleasant experience for the Jew. I remember accompanying my courageous, though scared, mother on a “visit” to one of these officials who would have to approve, sign and stamp some document – I don’t remember whether it was passport renewal or something else – and my mother was bombarded with numerous insults and questions designed to make her feel uncomfortable. I remember specifically a question about the nationality of the ship on which we were to sail to the U.S. My mother sensed that there may not be a right way to answer the question. To hire a non-German ship would be wrong, and a German ship should of course not be contaminated by a Jewish presence. So my mother lied that we had not yet purchased a ticket to the U.S., (we had, on the “Queen Mary”) and the man surprisingly accepted the statement.. Perhaps he had accomplished whatever humiliation he desired and wanted to go home.

It was also necessary to satisfy the Germans that our fiscal affairs were in accord with the

law of the moment – laws pertaining to Jews changed from day to day, and never in their favor.

At that particular moment Jews were permitted to take along furniture and other belongings that were in their possession; as for currency, only 10 German Mark per person could be taken out of the country. And money could not be converted into goods. So I remember an occasion when a Gestapo man came to our house with a demand to inspect our bank records. My mother had to document and justify every withdrawal to convince this official that we were not using any money to acquire something that we could take with us. A “visit” by the Gestapo was a frightening event, since one could never be sure that it would not result in an arrest. Such an arrest in Nazi Germany did not really require justification, but certainly anything not in order in the bank book would have led to serious trouble, as would a wrong word uttered by my mother. Well, we were lucky, and my mother ended up with another paper required for our departure.

Finally, all the necessary German papers, with renewals, had been juggled to be valid at the time our American quota number came up, and with it the opportunity to obtain that life-saving visa. The next step then was a trip to the U.S. consulate in Stuttgart, where the actual visas were to be conferred on us, provided all of our papers were satisfactory.

Gian Carlo Menotti’s opera “The Consul” describes the tribulations of people not wanted in one country attempting to obtain visas to go to another. I saw a performance of this opera about 1950 by the Louisiana State University Opera Department. I remember the scenery with a background showing an always closed door, behind which one could observe movements of the consul’s shadow – the consul himself never appeared. In the foreground the supplicant was seated on a very low bench at stage left, and the consul’s secretary was placed in front of an

exaggeratedly high bench, looking down – way down – on the supplicant on stage right. And she asked him for birth certificate, vaccination certificate, bank statement, passport, photographs, etc. All of which he had except that the photographs were not the right size. So she told him to come back tomorrow, and the supplicant replied: “Oh, yes, tomorrow - and the day after tomorrow, and the day after...,” he knew that every day something new would be requested that he didn’t have.

Our appearance at the U.S. consulate was not like that, not in actuality, but figuratively, in terms of all that had to be done to get to the point at which we could come to the consulate, it was exactly like that.

But we did get behind the door to see the Vice-Consul, if not the Consul himself. Before that door was opened, though, we were subjected to a major scare. It was noted that I was rather thin, not at all the corpulent boxer of my father’s prediction. They considered the possibility of tuberculosis, which would have kept me out of the U.S. My mother had to take me to a radiologist for an X-ray that fortunately proved negative, and so I could enter the Consul’s door, and after that, his country.

The trip to the U.S. was a high point of my life to which I looked forward with tremendous anticipation and hope for the future, and I was not to be disappointed on either score. I kept detailed notes of my trip, and wrote about this trip after my arrival in the U.S. I began to write in German, but after I believed myself proficient in English I started the whole thing over again in my new language. When completed, I made a cover for the “book,” which had been

given a lengthy title: “From Frankfurt (on the Main River in Germany) to Louisville, Ky. (in the United States of America),” and described on the title page as “a true emigration story from Germany to the United States, with illustrations by Guenter Eichhorn.”!!! In addition to the “illustrations” the “book” contains maps to accompany the text for the European part of the trip to the embarkation point at Cherbourg and then across the Atlantic to the U.S. Since the notebook that was transformed into the “book” contained more than the 109 pages required for the narration of the trip, I added a sort of appendix of 46 pages, with the title: “Frankfurt (on the Main River in Germany) – with illustrations by Guenter Eichhorn and Photographies (sic) by K. Schmidt-Wolfkratshausen,” the latter being pictures of Frankfurt that had somehow made it to the U.S. with us. Both books even contain a pronunciation glossary! (Apparently I could not conceive of leaving any pages blank.)

On reading these accounts from an adult perspective I am satisfied that I presented this youthful adventure quite accurately and with an understanding of the conditions under which the trip was undertaken. I suppose that a positive aspect of the predominantly negative character of the period is that a child could learn a great deal of the world when constantly exposed to the difficulties that world provided and that had to be overcome. On the other hand, the writing style was clearly that of a child, not unexpectedly since that is what I was, and moreover, I was writing in a newly acquired language. A comparison of this English narration with the unfinished earlier German version demonstrates nevertheless that the German was better written and my assumption of English proficiency somewhat premature.

My 1938-39 “book” contains an interesting omission. Having described the arrival of our

ship in New York on March 20, 1938, I state that “there is not much to tell about the rest of this day... also the next day, March 21, nothing very important (sic) happened...” It is very curious that, having found excitement and adventure on every day of this trip, and having had a great deal to describe at the beginning of March 20, suddenly the rest of that day and the next “nothing... happened.”

Actually a great deal did happen on these days that did not fit my idea of a world divided between good and evil, as represented by the U.S. and Germany. This dichotomy assuredly was real, but my childish idea that the good had to be all-encompassing was not. Thus I had not imagined that my arrival in the U.S. could have any “evil” context at all. Unfortunately the paper problems encountered in Germany pre-Stuttgart pursued us to the U.S., because the U.S. consulate in Stuttgart had failed to notify the authorities in New York that our visa had been approved. We had our documentation in hand, but the confirmatory documentation directly from Stuttgart was missing. Hence we were taken to Ellis Island, which is known to many Americans as the place where their ancestors entered the U.S. in earlier days. By 1938 Ellis Island had become a destination for those to whom entry into the U.S. was denied. The island was in fact a prison, a relatively benign one, but a place without freedom and with gaolic characteristics such as monitored circular walks in the yard. Fortunately, we were “released” on the following day, and the promise of America was then fulfilled, and continued to be fulfilled for me, but on these two days “nothing happened” that I believed could happen in the promised land.

The U.S. was after all *our* promised land as it was for many others. For some it was Palestine, the place of which Jews throughout the world continued to dream as a promised land,

but the dream was not fulfilled for many at their time of need, since Britain, which controlled that country, made Jewish entry into it difficult at first and virtually impossible later on. Others went to South America, Asia, Australia... The promised land was the one that let you in.

b. The “Legal” Route to Survival – or Death

When my family emigrated to the U.S., two of my mother’s siblings, Aunt Hilda and Uncle Erich, came along, but my mother’s eldest sister, Aunt Palmir, did not. For her there was another promised land. Aunt Palmir’s eldest daughter, my cousin Elli, had gone to the Netherlands two years before, where Elli’s husband Jakob was involved in a Jewish-owned

business that had previously moved from Germany to the Netherlands. It was Aunt Palmir's plan, as well as that of her younger unmarried daughter Edith, to join Elli and Jakob in the Netherlands. That country had a liberal immigration policy for Jews, and Elli and Jakob were established there, and had experienced no difficulty in entering the country themselves.

And so it was that shortly after the rest of us had gone to America, Aunt Palmir and Edith got on a plane to Amsterdam, where the relatives were awaiting them. Perhaps indicative of the bad luck that was to befall them later, on the very day of their departure the Netherlands had implemented a policy that complicated entry into that country, and my aunt and cousin were not admitted and asked to take the next plane back to Germany. They decided that they would take a plane going anywhere other than to Germany, and were able to book a passage to Malmö, Sweden, where they were arrested. Fortunately, the family in Amsterdam was able to secure the necessary papers for Aunt Palmir and Edith to enter the Netherlands on the following day, the family was then reunited, and all expected to live in that country for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, they could not foresee the future.

One happy event did occur in April, 1940 – the marriage of Edith to Emil Gobetz, who lived in Arnhem. But then came May, 1940, the Nazis invaded and occupied the Netherlands, and the escape from the Nazis was nullified. In the end, Aunt Palmir survived the Holocaust, but both of her children and their husbands became victims of it.

Communication between my family in Louisville and Aunt Palmir etc. ceased to exist after the Nazi takeover of the Netherlands, but we were informed of their whereabouts and

well-being indirectly through our Swiss relatives, who, by virtue of Swiss neutrality, could correspond with the U.S. as well as German-occupied Europe. I have recently come upon a postcard dated Aug. 16, 1942, from Edith and Emil Gobetz in Arnhem to Dr. Bertram Mayer in Lausanne, in which they indicate that they do not need the provisions that the Swiss relatives had offered, so long as they remained in Arnhem, and that they themselves could still help Aunt Palmir and Elli and Jakob, as long as they remained in the country. One deduces the exact location “in the country” from the fact that, as Edith writes, mail could be sent from there only once every 14 days – thus they were no longer in Amsterdam, but in Westerbork, the Dutch concentration camp. This postcard mentions no names or places directly; much information in those days was transmitted by code.

Evidently, in the summer of 1942 Edith and Emil Gobetz were still in Arnhem, and Aunt Palmir and Elli and Jakob Flörsheim were in Westerbork, not a pleasant place, to be sure, but better than the alternatives nevertheless. Unfortunately, those alternatives were their destination and their destiny.

We did not hear anymore from the family until after the liberation by Russian troops of the Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. My Aunt Palmir was among those freed; she had survived the horrors of the Theresienstadt camp, which was not provided with the efficient killing apparatus of the extermination camps like Auschwitz, but which killed its inhabitants simply by the severity of the conditions under which they were forced to live (like sleeping in communal beds with no toilet facilities), and the hard labor they were forced to perform. Aunt Palmir told us of these ordeals when she came to the U.S. in 1946. She had survived two concentration camps, Westerbork and Theresienstadt, and lived to be 103

years old.

Her children and their husbands were less fortunate. They had apparently also been sent to Theresienstadt, but from there they were transported to the extermination camps.

The postwar government of the city of Frankfurt has dedicated the walls of an old Jewish cemetery in Frankfurt as a memorial to the Holocaust victims from Frankfurt. Each victim is represented by a plaque with name, married women's maiden name, date of birth and date and place of death. From these plaques we could see that Elli Flörsheimer, born in Frankfurt on 22-06-09, died in Auschwitz. Her husband Jakob shared her fate. Jakob's mother, Franziska Flörsheimer, died in Theresienstadt on 17-12-42. Edith Gobetz, nee Markus, died in Stutthof on 11-01-45. We have no record of her husband Emil's death, but assume that he likewise shared his wife's fate.

I have written about the somber family gathering in Frankfurt on the day of Hitler's accession to power. Similarly etched into my memory is another family gathering, this time in Louisville when Aunt Palmir upon her arrival there related her experiences and those of her family during the last six years to the rest of us – my mother, grandmother, Uncle Erich, Aunt Hilda, Uncle Adolph, Margot, and me. Aunt Palmir sat in the center, straight as can be, methodically proceeding with her narration, in chronological order telling of the events as they occurred. She spoke in a beautiful High German, the “correct” German our family used in company, though the custom was to speak among themselves in a mixture of High German and the dialect of the Pfalz where my mother's family originated. Aunt Palmir had become

accustomed to using the High German for many years living among strangers.(Eventually she reverted to the mixed dialect of the rest of the family.) None of us interrupted her monologue which was presented with beautiful diction. Having got it out of her system on that day, Aunt Palmir never again said a word to us of those horrible times that destroyed her family. She had the strength to survive ordeals that others could not bear. Of course luck played its role, in that Aunt Palmir remained in Theresienstadt until she could be liberated, whereas her children were removed from that place and sent to the extermination camps.

I have recently learned that Aunt Palmir's reluctance, after her initial revelations, to speak of her concentration camp experiences to us, her immediate family, did not extend to others who visited. Thus my cousin Ludwig Haas remembers being told on such a visit of the use of the Theresienstadt inmates as guinea pigs by "doctors" who injected them with doses of virulent diseases. After hearing this story from Ludwig, I did remember having heard it from Aunt Palmir on the eventful day after her arrival in Louisville. She had related so many horrible aspects of concentration camp life that much of what she had said became an aggregate of horrors, and many details were forgotten.

Altogether eight of the closest members of my family on my mother's side survived, and four of them succumbed to the Holocaust. In all cases survival occurred through essentially legal means, and the failure to survive was due to the failure of these means to make escape from the Nazis possible.

c. An “Illegal” Route to Survival

Although the Netherlands turned out to be futile as an escape route from the Nazis for Aunt Palmir’s family, it made possible the survival of four of my relatives on my father’s side. Survival under tremendous stress, but survival nevertheless. Of course, anything illegitimate under Nazi law could be mandatory by the laws of humanity.

My Aunt Lina and husband, James Loewenstein, who had owned a business dealing with watches and precious metal jewelry in Bad Homburg near Frankfurt, moved their business to The Hague in the Netherlands in 1934. They were accompanied by their children Kurt and Sitti, as well as Lina’s mother, my grandmother Helene Eichhorn. Aunt Lina and Uncle James died of natural causes in Holland before the Nazi invasion, and I believe that my grandmother also died in this way.

That left my cousins Kurt and Sitti, both of whom married in Holland and along with their spouses managed to stay alive throughout the Nazi occupation. They survived by subterfuge, a story à la Anne Frank, but a successful one. Their survival stories were related to me by their children, Rob Hochheimer and James Loewenstein.

Kurt was married in Amsterdam, and he and his wife Henny spent much of the war in hiding in various places, with the use of false papers. One hiding place was in Rijsenburg, a part of the municipality of Driebergen, but they departed from there when they suspected that people living across the street from them, whom they believed to be Dutch collaborators of the Nazis, had become aware of their real identity and would be likely to betray them. Thus, unlike the Frank family, they were alerted to the presence of their potential betrayers before the trap could

be sprung, and they moved to another hiding place in Driebergen proper.

Also unlike the Frank family their possession of false papers enabled them to avoid total confinement in the hiding place, especially for Henny, who was blond and had an Aryan appearance (she was the daughter of an Orthodox rabbi!). Kurt, on the other hand, with his dark hair could easily be taken for the Jew that he was and therefore stayed inside most of the time, feigning “heart problems.” (In view of his early death from such problems one wonders to what extent they were really feigned.)

As in other Nazi-occupied territories, the Netherlands had its Nazi collaborators like the ones who forced Kurt and Henny’s escape from their first hiding place. In fact, the Dutch police conspired with the Germans, seeking out the Jews, taking them into custody and turning them over to the Germans for transportation to the concentration camps.

On the other hand, many of the Dutch worked against the Nazis and for the Resistance, as in the case of the Frank family’s protectors. Fortunately, some of these anti-Nazi Dutch were to be found among the Dutch police, and it was these “good” policemen who informed Kurt and Henny when the “razia,” the roundup of Jews and other “undesirables” would take place, so that they could seek more clandestine shelter until the “razia” was over. Sometimes they would hide in the woods surrounding the village; at other times they would be hidden in a church by a pastor (Torenbeek) who did a great deal to help my cousins during these periods. They would be hidden in the church tower or in the space between the church floor and the ground. When the Germans came to search for the fugitives, the pastor’s wife vehemently put them off with the declaration

that she was a strictly observant Christian with many children, and how could they imagine that she would endanger her family by hiding Jews?! Were it not for the aid of these Christian benefactors who helped them at great risk to themselves, their regular hiding place would not have saved them.

In fact, this “regular” place was a precarious one; some of their neighbors could be trusted and were familiar with their Jewish background, while others were led to believe that their false papers represented their true identities. Kurt and Henny could never be sure that a careless gesture or word that might be overheard would betray them. The ability to hide from the hiding place was paramount for their survival. And so was their luck!

Fortunately this luck did not abandon them during a most crucial period, the birth of their son James just two weeks before the Nazis were completely expelled from the Netherlands. Henny’s labor started in the evening, their doctor had to be conveyed to their hiding place, and for once Kurt had no choice but to venture outside, Jewish features notwithstanding, though the darkness made them more difficult to discern. Unfortunately it was curfew time, so that he had to pass through one road-block after another on his bicycle equipped with wooden tires, but fortunately the road-blocks were manned not by the SS but by old German soldiers possibly not fit for combat and apparently very little suited to the present task, so that Kurt slipped through all of the obstacles, false papers and all. The doctor hesitated initially, afraid to go about during the curfew – his genealogy included a Jewish grandmother – but Kurt convinced him to come, presumably citing his own ability to make it to the doctor’s. The two did return to the hiding place in time to deliver a healthy son named James, and this second James became a chemist, the

fifth in the family, and is now living in Israel.

While Henny was awaiting Kurt's return with the doctor, her labor pains were compounded by extreme mental anguish; she had no idea whether Kurt would be successful in his quest for the doctor, and, for that matter, whether she would ever see her husband again. She lived and relived these dreadful moments throughout her life. Both Kurt and Henny died young – Kurt at 52 in 1970 and Henny in 1971, and their son believes that the dreadful war experiences, though survived by both, were partly responsible for their early deaths.

Kurt's sister Sitti was also a survivor, partly as a result of subterfuge, though she was unable to avoid the concentration camps in the end.

Sitti met her husband while the latter was on a business trip selling jewelry to jewelry shops. Frits Hochheimer owned a wholesale jewelry business in Amsterdam, and sold his wares throughout the Netherlands. His itinerary included the Loewenstein jewelry shop in The Hague, where he met my cousin Sitti, and began possibly to favor the Hague shop more than the business warranted. In 1939 Frits and Sitti were married and lived in Amsterdam in the house purchased years ago by Frits' father who had acquired Argentinian citizenship. When the Nazis arrived, Frits and Sitti falsely claimed Argentinian citizenship through the use of Frits' deceased father's passport. Argentina was at the time allied with the Axis powers, and the Germans did nothing to harass Argentinians even when they were Jews. When the Nazis began to question the similarity between Frits the person and his supposed photograph as well as the birth date on the passport, the Hochheimers managed to manufacture false Argentinian passports

on their own – apparently not a very difficult feat since these documents at the time were very flimsy. At any rate, the Germans continued to respect their supposed Argentinian citizenship until the beginning of 1944, when Argentina decided that it had backed the wrong horse and switched over to the Allied side.

And with that the luck of the Hochheimers ran out. They tried to hide behind an attic wall in their Amsterdam house, but informants revealed their whereabouts to Nazi sympathizers among the Dutch police, who forced them out of their hiding place by threatening to shoot through the wall. An altercation ensued during which Frits actually attempted an assault on the police, who arrested him together with Sitti, tried them for this offense in an Amsterdam court and incarcerated them for some time in a regular prison, along with non-Jewish criminals. These circumstances delayed their transport to the Westerbork concentration camp, where Aunt Palmir and family had been confined, though eventually they were taken to Westerbork. From there they were dispatched to Bergen-Belsen, where, through some quirk of the Nazi establishment, they were again perceived as Argentinians and given preferential treatment by being placed into a somewhat less hazardous section of the camp for “Spaniards and Foreigners.”

Shortly before the end of the war, however, such considerations were abandoned when the Nazi operators of the camp forced them into a train headed east with the apparent object of drowning them and all those in the train in the Elbe river. Fortunately, the Germans fled before the Elbe was reached, while the train’s passengers were left without food and water until they were liberated by American soldiers on a very lucky Friday the thirteenth of April, 1945.

Thus, Sitti and Frits in the end survived because the war's end kept them from becoming part of the Nazi's "final solution." But the most significant aspect of their survival was their "illegal" acts in the earlier stages, particularly the fabrication of the false passports and the assault on the police, which kept them out of the camps long enough so that their presence in the camp was then too short for the Nazis to execute their evil designs upon them.

I had known Kurt and Sitti, my first cousins, when I was a small child in Frankfurt and they were adolescents in Bad Homburg. When they moved to the Netherlands in 1934, I was 7 years old and I did not see them again for about 30 years after that. In 1962, on a 2-month trip through Europe and Israel I met them again, this time with spouses and children. Kurt (now Koert) and Henny had one child James, and Sitti and Frits had three children, Margriet, Fred and Rob. Immediately after the end of World War II (in Europe) we received a very lengthy letter from Kurt, describing the experiences of this branch of the family in great detail, but I had forgotten the letter's contents, and the letter itself appears to be lost. It is only through the help of my Dutch cousins, and particularly Rob and James (the latter now in Israel), who have written me about these events, that I have been able to chronicle the tribulations of their parents during World War II.

And these tribulations did not end with the war. Sitti especially was plagued by mental problems that her children believed were quite likely the result of her experiences in the war. During the early phases of that war, when the Hochheimers basked in the protective aura of their pseudo-Argentinian character, Sitti was quite heroic and negotiated with the SS for the release of "non-Argentinian" Jews, and she was immensely helpful to Kurt and Henny. At times Kurt used

his sister's home for hiding, and the connection with Pastor Torenbeek was established through Sitti's intercession. She performed an especially heroic act when Henny's sister Margot was caught in a "razia" and placed in a truck from which she escaped by jumping from it. Margot ran to Sitti's house, where it was known that Margot's disappearance had been noted by the Gestapo, who were looking for "the girl with the long ponytails." Sitti immediately relieved Margot of this easily spotted evidence of her "guilt," and later arranged for Margot's more permanent hiding place in the village of Aalsmeer.

Thus Sitti saved lives with her courage and determination, but the stresses that she endured exerted their toll after the war.

A peculiar aspect of the after-effects of the war experiences on Sitti and Frits is that they came to believe that the way to avoid future catastrophic consequences of being Jewish was simply to cease being Jewish, and thus they converted to Christianity and had their children converted also. The result of the children's conversion was perhaps different from anything the parents could have expected. Margriet, the eldest, has no religious affiliation, Fred is a strictly Orthodox Jew, while Rob, the youngest, considers himself a traditional but less observant Jew. What is most remarkable about these siblings is that, in spite of their very different religious outlook, they are as loving as brothers and sisters could possibly be. They could serve as role models for all those throughout the world who are unable to bridge such differences.

In spite of the post-traumatic consequences of the Nazi occupation that afflicted my

father's sister Lina's family, they did survive. My father's brother Max's family did not.

d. Failure of "Legal" Escape Attempts

My Uncle Max remained in my father's birthplace in Richelsdorf after my father had moved to Frankfurt and Aunt Lina to Bad Homburg and then The Hague. He remained in the ancestral home that sheltered besides himself, his wife Rosel and sons Lothar and Gerhard. Unfortunately nothing could shelter a Jew who could not get out of Nazi Germany.

Not that they did not try. How hard they tried I know only too well since my mother was so much involved in the attempts to get them out. Attempts to obtain an affidavit from Max's cousin Joseph, who had emigrated to the U.S. in 1895, failed. Joseph had brought his brother Leopold and four sons to the U.S., and apparently attempted to bring his other brother Max (my uncle's namesake) but the U.S. would not permit entry to him and his wife because of the latter's tuberculosis. I assume that Joseph's capacity to help his German relatives was stretched to the limit, and that by the time brother Max was refused admission, it had become too late for cousin Max. Attempts by Leopold's sons to provide an affidavit were rejected by the U.S. authorities.

Meanwhile my mother, then in Louisville, had persuaded Rabbi Jacob J. Gittleman to

provide an affidavit pledging \$75 a month to the family, while our family promised to clothe, feed and shelter them as long as necessary until they could provide for themselves. This affidavit was first executed in 1938, and was renewed in 1940 upon request of the U.S. Stuttgart consulate. But their quota number did not surface in time for them to be saved from the death camps. One of the plaques on the Holocaust memorial wall is dedicated to Max Eichhorn, and I suspect that it commemorates my uncle, but I cannot be certain that it is not a different Max Eichhorn, possibly the cousin with the tubercular wife.

I remember a family reunion when I was a small child, at which the three siblings, my father, Aunt Lina, and Uncle Max, and spouses and children had come together, and presumably also met cousins Leopold and the other Max. I remember that the two boys Lothar and Gerhard spent several years in Frankfurt learning a carpenter's trade; my mother invited them to dinner at various times. I also remember visits of the Max Eichhorn family to Frankfurt, and we have family pictures as evidence. I also have a postcard sent from The Hague to my mother and me in Frankfurt, indicating that Uncle Max had accompanied my grandmother Helene Eichhorn to The Hague, where she was to stay with the Loewenstein family. We assume that my grandmother had previously gone to Richelsdorf to stay with Uncle Max, while the Loewensteins moved from Bad Homburg to The Hague. The card indicated that Uncle Max had then brought his mother to the Netherlands; presumably he himself then returned to Richelsdorf.

These are memories of a lost family; we heard no more of them after 1940. So we mourn the death of a family destroyed by the unbelievable inhumanity of the Nazis, and incapable of being saved because of the insensitivity of bureaucrats who could have provided for a better

conclusion of this story.

Of the eighteen close family members who were living in Germany at the beginning of the Nazi period, ten including myself survived and eight died as holocaust victims. Four of the victims were on my mother's side – my cousins Elli and Edith and their husbands Jakob and Emil, and four on my father's side, Uncle Max and Aunt Rosel and my cousins Lothar and Gerhard.

9. Germany Revisited

My cousin Margot is determined never again to set foot on German soil; she and I lived close to each other in Nazi Germany during the same time period, and certainly had very similar experiences there. I have Jewish friends who were born in the U.S. and are equally committed to refrain from ever going there. I can certainly understand the feelings that lead to such a disposition, since I share the feelings and have always had a certain ambivalence to the thought of visiting Germany. The loss of eight close relatives in the Holocaust, coupled with my personal experience of terror that preceded it, would surely justify such a reaction. And yet I have returned to Germany as a visitor, as have many other Jews including some who had come close to death in Hitler's concentration camps. Some Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe, have come to Germany to stay, a step that would be impossible for me for many reasons, including my feelings for the land to which I escaped. But the emotions that keep some away from Germany are for me countered by other considerations that have led me there, and, for reasons that will become evident, have been amply rewarding.

When I first returned to Germany, and Frankfurt am Main, my birthplace, in 1962, I went to the cemetery, the Jewish cemetery where my father and grandfather are buried. I made some arrangements for improving the grave sites and noticed a curious change on my father's gravestone. This gravestone originally had name and dates of birth and death marked by bronze letters and numbers screwed into the stone, as documented by photographs taken at the time. Moreover, I remember the appearance of my father's grave quite well, because my mother visited that grave frequently between 1932, when he died, and 1938, when we left, and she always took me along, because she wanted me to remember my father whom I could no longer

see in the flesh, but whose image I could resurrect by coming to the stone.

On my return to the cemetery in 1962, I found my father's gravestone just where it had been before, but the bronze letters were no longer there. They had been removed by the Nazis for uses of greater benefit to them, thus leaving the stone unidentified. After World War II the inscription had been reinserted – this time by engravings into the stone. I am not certain who was responsible for these engravings, but I suspect it was the city of Frankfurt; it would be in line with other similar activities of the city authorities.

When my wife and I revisited the Frankfurt cemetery during our trip there in 2000, we noticed that a number of the gravestones there had additional inscriptions newly made on them to indicate that one spouse was buried elsewhere because he/she escaped to another country after the death of the spouse who had died in Frankfurt. We made arrangements to amend the inscriptions on my father's and grandfather's graves in the same way.

This most recent trip also included a visit to Richelsdorf, the small town where my father was born. The mayor of the village accompanied us to the Jewish cemetery, where many Eichhorns are buried, and also Loewensteins, and I suspect that most of those laid to rest there were related to me, since I know of one marriage between the two families, that of my Aunt Lina Eichhorn to my Uncle James Loewenstein. The mayor also led us to the house of a retired mail carrier whose occupation had made him familiar with all who lived in the town and who had compiled (in 1986) a list of the Richelsdorf Jews as of 1930. Part of the list coincided quite well with information gathered elsewhere about my father's family. It included my Uncle Max and

wife and children, who of course I knew to be holocaust victims.

We had previously visited Essingen, the birthplace of my mother. The cemetery there contained the grave of my great-grandmother, after whom my mother was named, and I was able as a result of this visit to determine my mother's correct Hebrew name, which prompted a change on my mother's gravestone in Louisville.

It meant a great deal to me to honor in this way the memory of my forebears. If the Nazis had had their way, these cemeteries would have vanished, so that I could not have gone there (it would have been impossible anyway since I would have vanished too). Since the Nazis did accomplish their aims in part, it seems particularly important to me to make the most of where they failed. They could not erase the memory of those Jews who lived and died in Germany, and I think it is important that their memory remain intact.

The preservation of this memory is fortunately also the intent of post-World War II German governments as well as of certain German individuals.

To these people of conscience the incredible atrocities of the Holocaust remain as a dark cloud over Germany that cannot be dispelled. Nothing that Germans can do today can undo what was done then – the dead cannot be revived. However, travel in Germany cannot fail to impress those concerned with Holocaust history with the rigor with which Germans have acted to memorialize its lost Jews and to pay tribute to them.

The Jewish Museum in Frankfurt is a case in point. It is located on the banks of the Main River in a house that once belonged to the Rothschild family, whose banking business was founded in Frankfurt in the 18th century. This museum relates and documents the history of the Jews in Frankfurt all the way back to the 11th century. Its purpose, as declared at the museum's entrance, is to demonstrate to the German populace what pre-Nazi Jewish life had been like, how important the Jews had been to the community as a whole, and what Germany had lost through the persecution of the Jews during the Nazi time. It is important to recognize that this museum was created and is maintained not by a Jewish community, though that exists again in Frankfurt today, but by the City of Frankfurt. It is administered by Georg Heuberger, a man who is passionately dedicated to the task of preserving the history of Frankfurt's Jews.

This museum is described in a beautifully illustrated 112-page booklet, sent to me by the City of Frankfurt as part of a semi-annual presentation to Jews born in Frankfurt and forced to leave during the Nazi period. (I have also received the book "Nach der Kristallnacht," an edited volume with contributions from 16 authors who discuss what happened to the Jews in the Holocaust in excruciating honesty and detail.)

The Jewish Museum also administers the Museum Judengasse, in a different location within the city, built to enclose remnants of a part of the "Judengasse," the street that constituted the Jewish ghetto for many years.

Immediately adjoining this ghetto museum one comes upon what to me is the most remarkable tribute to the lost Jews of Frankfurt and most thorough condemnation of their

murderers. It is the wall built around the old Jewish cemetery (1272-1828). I have already described the 11,000 metal plaques that have been attached to this wall, a separate one for each of the Holocaust victims from Frankfurt, in alphabetical order. I had not been aware of this wall and discovered it by chance. Nothing else that I encountered in Germany had a greater effect on me. The wall contained the names of my two first cousins, Elli and Edith – and Elli's husband (Edith's husband was never in Frankfurt and therefore not commemorated there) – whom I had known and loved as a child in Frankfurt. It was in Elli's home that the bizarre meeting with my street tormentor, the "chameleon," occurred. I have mentioned that Max Eichhorn is also inscribed on this wall.

I suppose that the impact of this wall on me must resemble the effect of the Vietnam memorial on visitors with ties to those that are there inscribed. Such memorials, though evoking a presumably lesser effect on anybody with no knowledge of the deceased, must nevertheless have an impact on any sensitive individual who comes upon them. That has been apparent to me when visiting the Vietnam memorial, and although my wife and I were the only ones present when we viewed the wall in Frankfurt, I cannot imagine that anyone could look at it without some emotional reaction to this commemoration of the 11,000 innocent victims of the mass murder committed during the Nazi regime.

This memorial wall as well as the Jewish museum illustrate the efforts of official post-World War II Germany to pay homage to the murdered Jews. These official endeavors to tell the story of the German Jews are complemented by the work of individual Germans who have felt the need to preserve a history that was virtually extinguished in Germany's ugliest moments. We came upon one such effort when we visited Essingen, the village in the Pfalz

(Palatinate) where my mother was born. Essingen is near the city of Landau, where we had been told that a retired physician (Hermann Arnold) had written a carefully researched treatise, “Juden in der Pfalz” (Jews in the Palatinate, the part of Germany where Essingen and Landau are located – north of Alsace-Lorraine). This man had gone to the trouble of documenting the history of the Pfalz Jews, digging up many interesting facts going back many centuries. Parts of this story are not complimentary to Germans who lived in times that long predated Hitler; anti-semitism after all was not invented by the Nazis, though they practiced it in its historically most abhorrent form. I found references to my own family in this book, a copy of which is now in our library.

These efforts on the part of Germans today to preserve the country’s Jewish past demonstrate how different this Germany is from the place that I remember from my childhood. This difference is of course manifested in so many other ways – in the democratic government, in the strong support for a united Europe with German participation but not domination, in its liberal policies on immigration – which have attracted large numbers of Eastern European Jews to come and partake of the German hospitality, and to build new Jewish communities on the ashes of the old.

Of course the Germans, like humans in general, are not all made of the same mold. Hitler’s Germany contained its Herr Reinholds, and in today’s Germany there are those who disagree with the pattern that I have described, and there are some – the xenophobes – who dig up the vestiges of antisemitism and would not be unhappy to take part in a neo-Nazi revival. As we should have learned from the original Nazi surge, the few can multiply and become many. It

is for this reason that I consider it important to support those who make up and promote the democracy and diversity of the present Germany. In this way we help to prevent those dark currents that resonate with the Nazi past from gaining strength. And it is especially those of us who experienced at first hand the cruelties of the Third Reich – and therefore understand them best – who can help to prevent their recurrence by bolstering those who are with us and thus defeating those who are against us.

The path from my home in Frankfurt to the Holzhausenschule led past what I believe was the largest building in the city at the time – the I.G. Farben headquarters building, where Jews were not welcome, even before the Nazi era. The I.G. manufactured the cyclon B gas used for the murders in the concentration camps. I passed this building every day for four years, beginning in 1933, but when I came to Frankfurt in 1962 I entered the building, whose front entrance was adorned not with the swastika, but the black-red-gold of the old Weimar republic as well as of the new German state, and even more to the point, and of tremendous significance to me, with the stars and stripes, since the building was then the headquarters of the U.S. army stationed in Germany. My entry into this building under these conditions exemplified for me the tremendous change that had occurred since my childhood, starting with the victory of the Allies, which was of course the prerequisite to the emergence of a democracy in the place that had been haunted by the horrible Hitler regime. On my latest trip to Frankfurt I discovered that the building had become the home of the University of Frankfurt. A large plaque in front of the building exposed the horrible work that had been done there and exhorted onlookers to never forget what happened.

The house whose ground floor my family occupied while my father was alive was still standing, though riddled with holes and other damage. The house to which we moved after my father's death when we were joined by my uncle and grandparents had been obliterated, as shown by a photograph by my friend Fred Westheimer, who took the picture on a post-war tour of duty in the U.S. army. Reuterweg 53 and 57 were still standing; our house was no. 55.

The Westendsynagoge, the house of worship I attended as a child, whose interior had been destroyed on Kristallnacht, had been restored to its previous appearance, except for the changes made to accommodate the Orthodox Jews who occupied it now and required some structures that were different from those that served the Liberal congregation of my youth.

The Philantropin, the Jewish school I attended in 1937-8 had been taken over by the city – when I first saw it again in 1962 it contained a cinema whose marquee displayed pictures of Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman in “Die Katze auf dem heißen Blechdach.” That was a bit of a shock to me, not because I had any problem with Tennessee Williams' play, but because in that particular place it struck me as quite inappropriate. Later the building was sold to the city of Frankfurt and now contains a school and music conservatory, but the walls of the main hallway display posters explaining the history of the Philantropin as well as the atrocities committed upon it by the Nazis. I remembered my wonderful teachers who had been killed, including the admirer of Goethe, Dr. Marbach, who would have been happy to hear that the birthplace of his idol Goethe had been completely restored. Goethe, incidentally, could speak and read Hebrew as well as Yiddish. He overcame not only the antisemitic writings (ritual murder) and depictions to which he had been subjected, but also his own initial unfavorable impression of the unsavory

character of the vastly overcrowded ghetto, and befriended the ghetto Jews and participated in their religious ceremonies.

I became aware of Goethe's interest in the Jews by reading his autobiographical "Dichtung und Wahrheit," and this awareness is one of many aspects that have led me to the particular point of view with which I regard Germany and the Holocaust. There is also my early encounter with people like my teacher Reinbold. And there is a historical perspective that has taught me the obvious fact that people of many nations have exhibited ethnic hatred and expressed it through violence. It seems to me then that the Nazi oppression of the Jews and the Holocaust to which it led should cause us to condemn not only the particular phenomenon but also the general phenomenon of ethnic hatred. I do not believe in inverting German hatred of the Jews into Jewish condemnation of everything German. Such considerations have been involved in my decision not to shun Germany and instead to applaud those Germans whose outlook is antithetical to that of the Nazis. As I have said, I have an emotional component that produces an ambivalence within me, and I can respect the feelings of those whose actions conform to one side of that ambivalence, while mine are guided by the other. My family has roots in Germany which Hitler said must be pulled out – Germany must be "judenrein" – free of Jews. In spite of all that has happened to me and my family and the Jews in the 1930s and 1940s I want those roots to remain alive with the spirit of my forebears, and thus prevent Hitler from gaining his final triumph.

PART II – DAWN

LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD

1. How do you like America?

This question or a variation of it was asked by nearly all, and not unexpectedly, since we knew that the questioners wanted to hear the favorable reply they anticipated. And of course they would get it. How could one not like a place where one was a human being, having just come from a place where one was not?

In the linear progression of my life there is a very sharp line at the year 1938: everything that occurred afterwards was so very different from what had happened before. When I arrived in the U.S. as an eleven-year-old I was confronted by what was indeed a New World for me, in which not everything was better, as my questioners believed, but in which the composite was so incomparably better than my previous life under the Nazis, though vividly remembered, seems somehow unreal, an unpleasant dream, a nightmare.

From the perspective of living in a country where things happen more or less plausibly, the existence of a place like Nazi Germany seems almost unbelievable. When I think about my life there, it is almost as if it is something I saw in a movie instead of actual experience. And that is one of the reasons I have written about it – to remind myself and to attest to others that I *was* there, it existed, the nightmare was not a dream.

Some interesting attributes of our new land first became evident while traveling through

it by train. It was 1938, when passenger trains were still the mode of transportation for inter-city travel throughout the U.S. The vastness of the country was apparent from the time required to move from place to place, but it was most effectively brought home to us when, on the train between Cincinnati and Louisville, we spotted a clock at a railroad station that showed a time one hour earlier than indicated by our watches. We had just gained an hour by moving from the Eastern to the Central time zone (Louisville later adopted Eastern time), and were made aware by fellow passengers that the U.S. spanned four time zones. For comparison, we had passed just six such zones in crossing the Atlantic, and of course no zone changes had occurred when we traveled between four European countries on the way to the ship that would take us to the U.S. These countries shrank for us when their dimensions were compared to those of American states.

A more important revelation, though, came from contact with our fellow passengers.

The car on the train that we occupied between Cincinnati and Louisville was of a type unknown to us. Comfortable armchairs and small tables were distributed throughout the car. It occurred to me recently in retrospect that this was a Club Car, and that we had not paid for such an accommodation, and that no-one informed us of this circumstance and we departed the train in Louisville quite ignorant of the matter. Our tickets had been inspected on the train and we had engaged in conversation with several other passengers, and they had become aware of our status as immigrants into this country and where we had come from. I suspect that they were not unhappy that we were being welcomed to our destination within the U.S. in this luxurious car, and particularly did not wish to see us escorted from it.

Among the passengers of the car was the Mayor of Louisville, who invited my uncle to visit him in his office. The invitation by the Mayor and the failure of my uncle to take advantage of the opportunity are indicative of a difference in social interaction that I encountered in the U.S. as compared to Europe. Quite aside from the cruelty of the Nazis, my family even in pre-Nazi Germany was accustomed to a stiffness in behavior and lack of any kind of intimacy with strangers and only a bit more intimacy among acquaintances. The very casual acceptance of us strangers into the company of the indigenous passengers and the apparently genuine interest of the Americans in our plight came as a most pleasant surprise.

Even if a New World is better than the old, it does present problems because though better it is different and requires accommodation to the difference. Since others have come to this New World before and after me, and still others have yet to come, this need to adjust is a continuing requirement for newcomers. And yet the willingness to adjust varies greatly. Of all the adjustments one must make, none is perhaps more critical than language. In the U.S. at present there is a debate over the need to offer Spanish-speaking children a bilingual education. It is not my intent to enter into this debate here. I do want to describe how I viewed the linguistic problem when I arrived in the U.S., and how I proceeded to solve it. And my solution was similar to that of many others who had come from the same place and for the same reason.

The perspective produced by the life-and-death urgency of our move to the U.S. led us to expect from the new country nothing more than to let us come, since letting us come meant giving us life. We expected to adjust to the country, not the country to us. We had a lot to learn. The thought of course never occurred to us that we would be taught in German; instead we had

an overwhelming desire to learn English as fast and as well as we could.

I personally did have an advantage in having studied some English in my last year in Germany. But the ability to understand that Jack had jumped out of bed, brushed his teeth, and joined Maud at the breakfast table did not help me to understand how silver was mined and lumber produced in the American West. The geography text that exposed me to these exotic endeavors was the most difficult of all the texts I had to digest in the first class that I attended in the U.S. My solution: two little dictionaries 2" high and 1 1/2" wide, one English-German, the other German-English. I carried them wherever I went and used them constantly, but I used them most for doing my homework, and especially homework in geography. My lessons required incomparably more of my time than that of my classmates, but in the end I came to class adequately prepared, and I enjoyed the sleuthing out of the words that described the innards of the Western landscape, and felt some pride in having got the best of them.

2. Going to School in America

My literary escapades in the American West actually took place in the 5th grade of Engelhard Elementary School in Louisville, KY., the city that was to be my home for the next nine years. The geography lesson was taught by Miss Marion, the same teacher who taught all the other subjects, except music; her specialty was education, rather than the specific subjects in which my teachers in the Philantropin in Germany had been trained. Other subjects, such as history, did not provide the degree of difficulty in vocabulary as geography had posed, or perhaps the history of the U.S. Civil War excited greater curiosity in me than the mining of minerals; of course I had no knowledge of American history whatever, and therefore found it quite fascinating, as I found all things fascinating that were new to me. Seventy-three years after the Civil War the history book used in the borderline state of Kentucky emphasized that it was also called the War Between the States, and that the causes of the war were economic, an essentially Southern view.

When I entered school in April, 1938, I was placed in the 5th grade, since I had not completed that grade in Germany, though in April I would have moved on to the 6th grade there (Quinta). In the U.S. I did not reach the 6th grade level until September, after a 3-month hiatus called summer vacation. But later on I made up a whole year, thus more than compensating for this temporary retardation.

In subjects that were common to my schools in Germany and the U.S. I was way ahead; for example, in the U.S. in the 5th grade we were just learning fractions, which we had mastered in Germany before reaching that grade. Yet the lack of a need to study things I already knew

provided me with that much more time to learn the English language, which I did in due time, using my child's ability to adapt and to imitate, my 2" dictionary, and my strong ambition to acquire this skill. According to the report cards I received at Engelhard, English was graded in four parts, reading, spelling, language and penmanship.

The spelling and penmanship components deserve some comments. Spelling had not been a subject for studying German in Germany, whereas in the U.S. we were periodically held responsible for a certain number of words taken from a "spelling book." Obviously the easy phonetics of German did not require any special instruction in spelling whereas the much more unpredictable spelling of the rather unphonetic English – the seven pronunciations of "ough" have been frequently noted – made spelling lessons necessary. I might make an observation that the unphonetic spelling in English is essentially confined to the Anglo-Saxon-rooted words, whereas for words derived from Latin either the individual letters or else the letter sequences (e.g. "tion") are generally pronounced alike.

Penmanship proved to be a teacher-driven predicament for me. In Germany I was taught to write the Roman alphabet very simply, with no curlicues and with a slant that was perfectly perpendicular to the lines on the paper. Moreover, I utilized a fountain pen, which produced heavy lines, so that my writing was totally different from what my fellow students had been taught. Apparently this matter became the subject of high-level discussions among the teachers and involved even the principal; it was recognized that I was quite accustomed to my German penmanship and executed it well, and that an attempt to Americanize it could set me back and in fact could bring about a deterioration of my penmanship. The outcome of the teachers'

deliberation was that it would be to my overall advantage to learn to write as the others did, and I was henceforth shown how to slant my letters at something like a 70° angle, with curlicues galore – especially for capital letters. Worst of all from my point of view, I had to discard my beloved fountain pen for a scratchy pen that had to be dipped into an ink well and held by a penholder, to produce a thin line that, combined with the curlicues, gave my writing a baroque appearance. Eventually I managed this transformation which I quietly considered an imposition at the time and which did indeed uglify my handwriting for quite a while, though my penmanship grade was enhanced from a “2” to a “1”, presumably because it now conformed properly to the American way. I admit though that my teachers did have my best interests in mind and they may actually have been right in converting one of the many items that differentiated me from my fellow students into something that made me conform a bit more to the local standards.

One ceremony, which occurred daily after Miss Marion had taken the attendance of her class, demonstrated to me that an American school could be as dedicated to American principles as a German school, Herr Lukas style, had been to those of the Nazis. The students in the four or five sections of the 5th grade, all on the same floor, rose from their seats and marched (casually, not in step) to an assembly hall, while the “Stars and Stripes” was being played. We all sat down on pre-arranged seats, recited the American’s Creed (I believe in the United States of America....) and the Pledge of Allegiance (I pledge allegiance....). This pledge did not contain the “under God” phrase that Congress later added to it. While this omission may appear to indicate closer adherence early on to the first amendment, it signified only that at the time no-one had yet thought to put the deity into the pledge. That the authorities were less sensitive

then to church-and-state separation than they are now was shown by the recital of the “Lord’s Prayer.” My Jewish sensibility was challenged by this procedure, yet I could find nothing in the prayer that offended me and participated in it without much scruple.

These ceremonies were concluded with the singing of a national anthem – not “the” national anthem, since Congress had yet to designate such. We sang “The Star-spangled Banner,” “America the Beautiful,” or “America” (“My country ‘tis of thee”). The music was led by Miss O’Connell, who then proceeded with a brief music lesson, in which we learned what are now considered traditional songs such as those composed by Stephen S. Foster, “Flow Gently, Sweet Afton,” etc. In December we sang Christmas carols – the need to acknowledge non-Christian holidays in the same way had not surfaced as yet.

At the end of the assembly period, which was shorter than my discussion of it might imply (perhaps 15-30 minutes) we returned to our “home room.” In the following year, in the 6th grade, the same procedure was followed on a different floor of the school.

These assembly activities illustrated to me the obvious political connotations of what is taught in schools. The recitations and the songs were vintage American and would not have occurred in the same way in any other country. Parts of the curriculum, of course, such as mathematics and the sciences, could be taught in the same way everywhere. Other curriculum components cannot be dissociated from a country’s politics. History has obvious political context, beginning with what is selected. Of course, more U.S. history is taught in the U.S. than in, say France, and less French history. A country’s involvement in history of course colors its

analysis. In my early encounters with U.S. history in elementary school virtually everything the U.S. had done was considered the proper thing to do. Later on, when I studied U.S. history at a more advanced level in the 11th grade, I was at first surprised by the honest evaluation of historical events that did not always place the U.S. in the right. Charles Beard, who wrote the book, has been taken to task for his work, but for me the discovery that American actions can be criticized this way in the classroom brought my appreciation of American culture to new heights. I saw a line, not well-defined, but a line nevertheless, between a patriotism that was highly appreciative of one's country and a superpatriotism that regarded one's country as superior to all else in the world, reminiscent of Nazi Germany, where it was taken to a degree not emulated by anything that could occur in the U.S.

I became aware in my earliest days in an American school, though, that we were taught in accord with American ideals, just as in Germany we were taught (in the public schools) what was considered relevant to the principles of the Nazis. But how different these ideals were!

Although some of the assembly proceedings may not be in accord with present thinking and practices in American schools, I accepted them wholeheartedly. I agreed with the sentiments expressed in the American's Creed and the Pledge, and saw nothing wrong with the Christian parts of the program – after all, I was now living in a predominantly Christian country, which differed from the one from which I had escaped in that I was not only allowed to live but to share the privileges of my Christian neighbors. My Jewish identity did not suffer in any way – my classmates knew all about my religious affiliation and my place of origin; in fact, at one time I was asked to describe my experiences to the class. I encountered no antisemitism or anything

that I could recognize as such, and though much later I did learn of its existence in this country, it rarely if ever affected me personally. I had no unpleasant relations with other pupils.

This is not to say that I mixed easily with the other children. In Germany I was more involved with other *Jewish* children there, since the enmity shown to us by the “Aryans” brought the Jews closer together. In the U.S., where I encountered no such enmity, I nevertheless found myself and my outlook so different from the others. My interests were aroused by what was going on in the world. I was an avid newspaper reader. In fact I was an avid reader of anything in sight. Most of the other children I knew were interested in sports and not much else, or so it seemed to me. These differences in interests and attitudes reinforced my natural shyness. I was no recluse, and did enter into conversations with others often enough, but the differences between us were generally evident. I once was asked whether I was for Male or Manual. I assumed that the interrogator was referring to political opponents, but discovered that he alluded to a football rivalry between two major boys’ high schools! Some years later I would attend Male High School and even a Male-Manual football game, but I could never attain the enthusiasm of the others for such activities.

My rather low interest in sports could perhaps have arisen from a medical problem that was not understood at the time but was later identified for me as “PAT (paroxysmal atrial tachycardia).” This problem caused an abrupt doubling of my pulse rate – generally unpredictably, but most often during exercise, especially running; eventually the normal rate resumed just as abruptly. This problem was first noticed in Germany and persisted, with diminishing frequency, until my 24th year (it began again much later, and a variety of cardiac

arrhythmias have plagued me in the more recent stages of my life). I believe that a fear of the onset of PAT discouraged me somewhat from strenuous physical activity, and perhaps helped to lead me to my greater interest in mental rather than physical activity. But I do not consider my voracious desire for reading and learning as a primarily negative response to these physical problems but rather a strong positive inclination toward intellectual activity, perhaps fostered somewhat by the importance that national and world affairs had in the development of my early life experiences.

3. America has no *Persil*

One of the problems that perturbed some German emigrants before setting out on their way to the US was how to do laundry in the new country. In Germany that required “*Persil*,” a product that seemed omnipresent in German households and was rumored to be unavailable in the U.S.! I heard that there were those who used some of their precious packing space for cartons of *Persil*. Fortunately my family was not among them, reasoning that Americans must have some means of cleaning their clothes, and, anyway, how long could a transportable amount of *Persil* be expected to last? After arriving in the U.S. my family found a detergent called *Oxydol* that they pronounced superior to *Persil*.

Germans believed themselves to be superior in virtually any technology, and of course they were leaders in certain areas, but our family had no illusions about universal German superiority. Yet numerous surprises were in store for us as we discovered one after another the ways in which American technology or the prevalence of its use was ahead of the German.

Our first apartment in Louisville contained a large refrigerator, an appliance generally in evidence wherever one looked. In Frankfurt “the iceman cometh” was the comparable experience. Radios were common in Frankfurt, but not as universally present as in Louisville, and in Frankfurt I had not seen large radios that were essentially pieces of furniture standing on the floor. These contained larger speakers and produced better sound. Automobiles were numerous in Frankfurt, but in Louisville they were in possession of virtually every family we knew. There were hundreds of traffic lights in Louisville; in Frankfurt one experimental traffic light had been installed just before we left.

Perhaps the most exciting innovation that we found was the American supermarket. By today's standards this appellation seems overwrought, since the dimensions of the genre have so vastly increased. Yet in 1938 the ritual of seizing a cart on rollers and pushing it through the store to carry the fresh fruit, cans of vegetable, boxes of cereal and all the other good things we had personally selected from the shelves was quite a new experience for us. In Frankfurt you entered even a chain store like *Schade & Füllgrabe* to be confronted by a long counter from behind which someone asked what you wanted and would measure out a liter of milk into the pitcher you provided or deposit five pounds of potatoes into a bag on the counter. The supermarket remained such a thoroughly American innovation several years into the post-World War II period that it became a part of any American exhibit at World's Fairs and other similar events. Of course eventually supermarkets became fixtures worldwide, as did the other Americanisms like Coca Cola, McDonalds and even O.K.

And yet, although American technology seemed generally to surpass the German when we arrived in 1938, there were German items that were clearly superior to the American. One of these was the garbage disposal system. In Frankfurt we were accustomed to the use of standardized garbage cans, whose lids were designed to fit over a receptacle/hole in the rear of the garbage truck. When the garbage cans were upended on top of this receptacle, the lids of the can and receptacle opened simultaneously to permit the trash to flow from the garbage can into the truck without contaminating the atmosphere. The method used in Louisville, in contrast, consisted of the garbage from the garbage cans being thrown through the air onto the truck which was then driven to its next stop with its spread-out garbage open to the atmosphere.

In 1938 I was surprised to find phones requiring operator assistance for local calls along with dial phones. I had known only the latter in all of my years in Germany.

It has always seemed odd to me that obvious technological improvements can remain isolated in a world where communication is so rapid. The answer, I suppose, lies in the matter of priorities, which I believe accounts at least partly for such differences. In spite of the legendary streets paved with gold rumored to exist in America, as well as the very real prosperity that we encountered here, American capabilities were not limitless, and the country had not, on our arrival, emerged from the depression that had plagued it for a number of years.

4. America has Baseball and a Free Public Library

While still in Germany I regularly read a child's edition of the *Jüdisches Familienblatt*, and I continued to receive this periodical after arriving in the U.S. I particularly remember a story written for that paper by a teenager who had emigrated to the U.S. In the story he recounted his adventures in delivering newspapers the American way, and explained how he folded the paper to make it serviceable for pitching to the front doors of the houses he passed without deviating from his linear path. Particularly striking was his ability to propel a paper onto second- or third-floor balconies – this skill was illustrated by a picture that remains in my memory, and that I recently rediscovered. I was delighted to be able to confirm that the story and the picture were absolutely correct.

There were of course countless ways in which life in the U.S. differed from what we had previously known. The extensive use of cosmetics by American women came as a surprise to my mother, who was at first appalled by the deep red lipstick that was then in vogue. When an acquaintance explained to her that she considered appearing in public without lipstick to be similar to walking on the street without clothes, my mother, no nudist, relented and her lips then acquired the hue that adorned other women's lips. In her European experience my mother had considered such lip enhancement as characteristic of prostitutes and other *demimonde* types.

Before coming to the U.S. my mother had fashioned for me a pair of "knickerbocker" pants that she had read were popular in this country. If that was so at an earlier time, when we arrived in Louisville I became the sole wearer of this apparel in the city, and thus carried on my person a distinguishing factor that differentiated me even more from other children, in addition

to the differentiating features already mentioned. My mother produced a more suitable pair of pants for me as soon as she could.

My mother as well as the other female members of the family were very proficient in culinary skills, but in the U.S. they learned to apply these skills to foods they had not known or at least not used before. Corn had been known in Germany as food for pigs, and such items as squash, watermelon, cantaloupe, broccoli (green cauliflower?), so common in the U.S., were unfamiliar to them. They discovered the widely used celery stalks, but could not find the celery root familiar to them. Uncle Harry, husband of my mother's cousin, enlightened us about the exotic American foods, and at the same time attempted to find for us, usually without success, the foods from the German repertoire that were missing here.

Considering the fact that I was no sports enthusiast, but was accustomed, in a minimal way, to engage in the one ball game played in Germany, soccer, imagine my consternation when confronted with three very popular ball games that every boy in the U.S. was expected to play. I could not escape baseball, basketball, and even football in the gym period and at recess. I was thus encumbered with additional activities in which to perform poorly, and became accustomed to being the last one selected for a team in these sports. In baseball I learned to bunt, not that I could do it well, just better than hitting the ball more seriously. In football I learned to keep out of the way of the people who wanted to knock me down. (How could I block someone twice my size, and that would be anybody?) I was somewhat better in basketball, at least with free throws, since I could make baskets fairly accurately. But that skill was exercised primarily in shooting practice, where the ball was on hand for making the shot, unlike in a game, where it was

necessary to bring the ball into position, and all those people on the other team doing their best to keep me from doing it.

To make up for the sports harassments to which I was subjected, the City of Louisville provided me with the Louisville Free Public Library. For a bookworm like me a whole building with books to borrow, and free to boot, was, as one of the books put it, manna from heaven.

Not that I had no access to books before discovering this library. My family possessed a treasure of books in German, consisting mainly of volumes of the complete works of the classic German writers, such as Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Lessing, etc., which my parents had acquired when they married, as well as various contemporary works that my Uncle Erich had accumulated. The works of one non-German writer, Shakespeare, were also there, in German, and it was to these that I was particularly attracted. The Shakespeare volumes were arranged in an unusual way, with the histories making up Volume 1 and the beginning of Volume 2, and appearing there in chronological order – historically chronological, not in the sequence in which they were written, with *König Johann* first, then Richard II, *Heinrich IV* in 2 parts, *Heinrich V*, *Heinrich VI* in 3 parts, Richard III, and finally *Heinrich VIII*. I had no real concept of the significance of Shakespeare, and read these works partly as history, in which I was always interested. Of course there was much that escaped me as a 10-11 year old reader. Fortunately, though, these works in translation, by Schlegel, were considerably easier to read than the original, since the translation was into 19th century German, with no attempt to supply the German in use during Shakespeare's time. Much later I heard that this translation was generally considered to be a very good one, and when I compared the original with the translation, I was impressed by the magnificence of

this translation, though my opinion was hardly that of an expert. But my evaluation apparently conforms to that of the real experts.

I remember also reading a six-volume set by Gustav Freytag of the fictional history of a family, beginning, in the year 357 with the ancient Germans who lived during Roman times, and ending with their descendants who lived in 1825. The lives of succeeding generations illustrated the history of the periods in which they lived, somewhat as James Michener later wrote about other civilizations.

My eclectic readings included a five-volume translation of Edgar Rice Borough's Tarzan stories, in German. A series of books that was read generally by boys of my age during my last years in Germany were those of Karl Mai; since these were not to be found on my family's shelves, I borrowed them from others, and read them voraciously, as they were meant to be read; they were juvenile page-turners of adventures in the American West as well as in the exotic Near (Middle) East, with Baghdad and environs a common venue. Thus my literary repertoire varied from what was usual for children of my age to material intended for much older readers. But I didn't know that, and, for better or worse, partook of the fruits of the tree of knowledge, whether permitted or forbidden.

When I arrived in the U.S. and became acquainted with the public library, a large part of it was forbidden fruit, since I was confined to the children's section. But the permitted part opened up a huge territory of literary exploration for me, and I availed myself of it with enthusiasm, always withdrawing a selection of books to be read and then to be replaced by

others after reading, at the expense of learning how to bat a baseball. Lack of access to the adult section was of no importance, since my English wasn't up to that anyway. In fact, at the beginning I read books intended for children of a lower age level, since that was barely my level at the time. Gradually I worked up to what excited me most, the history of the New World, of which I knew little that was not related to the exploits of the great Indian warrior, Winnetou, in the Karl Mai books. I devoured anything I could find about explorers like Cortez, Pizarro, DeSoto, etc. In the books that I read these personages received the heroic treatment, with no hint of flaws or wrongdoing in anything they did, and I enthusiastically participated in their exploits in Mexico or Peru or wherever.

As intrigued as I was in the New World that was so new to me, I have never forgotten my roots in the Old World, and was eager to learn the background of the horrible things that happened in Germany while I was there. I read a history of Germany, as well as a history of France and one of the Ancient World. Most of what I read I eventually forgot, but can one really be expected to remember what was done by each of the Louises with their appended Roman numerals? I did remember that Louis IX was "good," and Louis XIV "great," but I did not remember or perhaps ever know the degree to which these adjectives were deserved.

My early interest in history was later supplemented by other interests, especially science, but more of that later. Suffice it to say here that, of the many things that I liked in my new country, the Louisville Free Public Library was close to the top of the list.

5. Living without Money?

I don't know how one lives without money, unless one begs, frequents soup kitchens, and sleeps on the street. Fortunately, the \$10,000 available to us through Uncle Bertram's trust fund guaranteed that we were *not* without money, though the money wasn't really ours, since we never thought of it in any way other than for our temporary use and expected to return it in its entirety. Of course, the less we spent, the less we had to return, and so we spent as little as possible. We knew nothing of Keynesian economics.

We had arrived in the U.S. as two family units. One consisted of my mother, Uncle Erich, my grandmother (Weiss) and me; the other was the Preis family: my Aunt Hilda, Uncle Adolf and cousin Margot.

In Germany these family units lived in separate apartments, close enough to make possible a sort of brother-sister relationship between Margot and me, but apart nevertheless. In the U.S. it was decided that one apartment for the two families was cheaper than two, and so for eight years the two families lived side-by-side in a large but inexpensive (\$45/mo.) apartment, which was structured in such a way that the two families could maintain a certain amount of privacy, though that was by no means absolute, and didn't need to be; in fact, it was considered beneficial that "togetherness" could be achieved when that was desired.

The apartment was on the top floor of a three-story corner building (no elevator), whose long side was on an east-west axis, the short side north-south. Rooms on the south tier were

occupied principally by Weiss-Eichhorn, and those on the north tier by Preis, but this is a simplification, as we shall see. The door to the apartment led into a foyer, which in turn led into a hallway separating the north and south tiers. Going east to west, the south tier (facing the street) started with a large bedroom, which served as sleeping quarters for my mother and grandmother, who occupied twin beds on the west side, while I had a bed on the east end; between these sleeping accommodations was an octagonal table used primarily by me for doing my homework. Next to this bedroom was a small room that served as Margot's room, and next to that was a corner room that contained the Weiss-Eichhorn living and dining room furniture but was arranged to serve mainly as a living room (the "good" room used for company). Opposite that room was one that contained the Preis family living and dining room furniture, and it was set up mainly as a "good" dining room, used for company and special or festive occasions (like Seder). Next to that room on the north (now going west to east) was Aunt Hilda and Uncle Adolf's bedroom, and adjacent to that was the joint bathroom, and next to that, and opposite the foyer, was the kitchen. The latter contained two kitchen tables, one for each family; oven use was regulated to allow the families to eat their meals consecutively. The foyer served as a casual living room for all; it contained a writing desk, a radio, and armchairs; on one end Uncle Erich slept on a couch which he had constructed himself. Beside the entry door to the apartment the foyer had another door that led to a balcony.

I don't remember how we managed the bathroom arrangement – there were seven of us and only one of it – but it must have been rigidly scheduled in the morning, when the men had to go to work and the children to school. In the evening the family frequently gathered in the foyer to listen to the radio, mainly for news, which was always there and, in the early days of the war,

generally bad. I remember the commentators of the day quite well, people with distinctive deliveries – like Gabriel Heatter – “there’s *good* news tonight – what will Gables (Goebbels) think of that? – like Walter Winchell – “Good evening, Mr. & Mrs. North and South America, and all the ships and clippers at sea,” with hard news about the impending war, and then the war itself, intermingled with Hollywood stories: “It’s a baby boy for Mr. & Mrs. Movie Star.” And then there were the more conventional reporters, like John W. Vandercook and John Daly and Elmer Davis, who reported the news straight though in a distinctive and authoritative voice. Later, in the war came the famous CBS correspondents, Ed Murrow: “This! is London,” William L. Shirer in Berlin, Martin Agronsky in Ankara, etc. We listened to entertainment programs, especially light classical music that was not so different from the popular as it is now – the Longine Symphonette and others, quiz shows – Dr.I.Q.: “Ten silver dollars to that lady for the answer to this one!” Uncle Erich listened to the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons, and I joined him when not at the cinema. Toscanini conducted the NBC Symphony on Sunday (I think) – I remember listening to the newly composed Shostakovitch Symphony No. 7 (the Leningrad) – and we enjoyed the wit displayed on Information Please, with Clifton Fadiman, Oscar Levant, etc.

We sometimes listened to short-wave radio, principally London and Berlin. Once we heard Hitler, though not directly with our short-wave set but through U.S. network transmission. I remember his answering Roosevelt’s letter asking which of the world’s countries he intended to attack. Roosevelt listed the countries alphabetically and Hitler repeated them scornfully, and, when he reached Palestine, there was tremendous laughter from the mobsters surrounding him. When the U.S. entered the war, we had to give up the short-wave part of the radio (we were

enemy aliens) and Uncle Erich managed to remove the short-wave function from the set.

Any visitor was immediately ushered from the front door to the “good” living room at the far end of the apartment, and I remember many relatives and friends sitting in a certain arm chair that appears to have been reserved for guests. Among them was Selma Kling, who did much to make the new immigrants feel at home and who was slated to become Margot’s mother-in-law, though of course neither we nor she had any inkling of that then. I remember the Wolffs and the Levys, the Frankels and the Manns – Rabbi Louis and his mother, Aunt Frieda, and on and on with relatives from other cities – since my grandmother kept a large extended family together by her frequent correspondence with many of them – and friends from the local area..

We had Seder in the Preis “good” dining room; Uncle Erich presided in a traditional all-Hebrew Seder patterned after his father’s delivery – though there was muffled discussion of the German translation that some were reading, with comments mainly about the similarity in the situation of the Jews in Egypt described in the Haggadah and that of the Jews in Germany at that time.

The arrangement of the apartment thus worked for two families who got along well together, while providing a degree of privacy for each and the opportunity nevertheless to share needed facilities. Each family maintained its own budget, and fortunately the two men were able to find work after several months, in spite of the depression that was still ravaging the country. Both Uncles Erich and Adolf had been “businessmen” – traveling salesmen representing various companies, but they had the idea that Jewish refugees should not engage in business when they

came to the U.S. I am not certain how this idea came about. I suspect that it may have been engendered by the view that German antisemitism was in part due to the success of Jewish entrepreneurs who competed with non-Jewish businesses. They believed that refugees in the U.S. should perform manual labor instead, presumably to demonstrate that Jews did not consider such activity beneath them. I am reminded of the films about Palestine that I saw in Germany that showed the affinity of the Jewish pioneers to the land being tilled. Uncle Erich had, in fact, always had woodwork as a hobby, and in the U.S. he assumed the mantle of “cabinetmaker,” a somewhat higher niche in the woodworking genre. In this capacity he created the veneer for the large radios manufactured for Sears-Roebuck. At first he was proud and happy to be doing so well in a skill that he had taught himself, but eventually he came to dislike the assembly-line feature of this work, and moved back into “business,” this time conducted on the premises of local enterprises. (He eventually joined the Kling Co., after his niece had become Mrs. Kling.) Presumably he had convinced himself by then that he would not contribute to antisemitism by this act.

My mother and Aunt Hilda added to the family wealth by working at home embroidering silk pillow cases; they were paid 25¢ for painstaking work that must have entailed hours to accomplish. Even Margot and I contributed to the family treasury. Margot worked as a waitress in an ice cream parlor. I made a variety of Misrachim, decorated signs placed on an east wall to indicate the direction of Jerusalem. Misrach is Hebrew for east, and I sawed out the four Hebrew letters that make up the word and glued them onto a larger previously decorated piece of wood. For this effort I was also paid 25¢. A family friend hired me to give Hebrew lessons to her grandson, who I believe would have preferred to play outdoors, but had to endure my

ministrations so that I could get my 50¢ for this effort. I also sold magazines to people who knew my family and bought them, *noblesse oblige*. My aptitude for business was measured by my inability to sell to anyone else. If I had had any desire to go into business, which I did not, it would have been thoroughly quenched by this experience.

On the consuming side, money was saved in many ways. I shall never forget the glee expressed on my mother's face when she returned from a trip downtown with a dress for which she had paid \$1, but this price was not revealed until after she had subjected us to a guessing game, hoping to elicit much higher estimates, and she was generally obliged in this endeavor, though occasionally someone would pull her leg by venturing that it cost only a nickel.

When saving money, the best price is zero, and that sum was approximately the annual budget for entertainment for Margot and me. And for that price we were superbly entertained by going to the movies virtually every Saturday afternoon. Our families were avid attendants of synagogue services in the U.S., as they had been in Germany, and generally the seven of us sat in the same seats, in the fourth row, I believe. It so happened that behind us, presumably in the fifth row, sat the Switow family, who owned movie theaters, and Mr. or Mrs. Switow would provide us with free passes to their downtown theater (within easy walking distance). We knew nothing about schedules, and usually left in the afternoon after the Shabbat meal, and watched the end of one feature, then the whole of the other, and finally the beginning of the first until "that's where we came in."

In this way we spent little, worked hard, and thus lived quite well by our standards, being

well-fed, well-clothed and even well-entertained. Most importantly for us children, we were educated in the free public school system. And, of course, there was that wonderful library! Thus, with little money, we never felt poor – far from it, we felt lucky to be where we were and to have escaped from where we had been!

6. Why Louisville?

Most residents of Louisville that I know would consider this question absurd. They might counter with “what else is there?” But while the love of Louisvillians for their city is comprehensible to one who has lived there, the city obviously did not have the kind of stature abroad as New York or Chicago, and it is to those places that many of those escaping the Nazis decided to go.

My family, on the other hand, ruled out these vast metropolitan areas for the very reason that so many immigrants had come there and that job placement would therefore be more difficult, and although the continued effects of the depression would not make jobs readily available anywhere, they reasoned that it might be easier in a smaller place.

Having narrowed the search down to not-New York-or-Chicago, the family chose Louisville because there were relatives there, people who had arrived already in the previous (19th) century. Why was Louisville selected by these 19th century immigrants? I do not know what led our relatives to this place, but I can imagine that they followed a pattern characteristic of many coming to the U.S. from Germany at that time, people who had heard of the ability to establish a better livelihood in the U.S. and that the opportunities at that time were best in the “center” of the country. Quite a few settled in Louisville, and among them were Jewish families who came for the same reason as Christians, though perhaps the antisemitism that was always present in Germany, even after the Napoleonic “enlightenment,” may have been a contributing factor for the Jews.

It was thus that two close relatives of my grandfather Bernhard Weiss – his sister Frieda

and his niece Hermine, daughter of his sister Babette – came to Louisville.

My (great-) Aunt Frieda was 77 years old when we arrived in the U.S. Her husband David Mann had died, as had one of her two sons, but the other, Dr. Louis Mann, was doing very well as the rabbi of Temple Sinai in Chicago, where he practiced a rather radical form of Reform Judaism, or at least it appears radical now that the Reform movement has gravitated somewhat in the direction of more traditional Jewish forms. Aunt Frieda was a member of Temple Adas Israel, whose Reform practices were quite similar to those of our cousin Louis. She occupied a place of honor at Adath Israel, due perhaps in part to the friendship of its rabbi, Dr. Joseph Rauch, with her son Louis. She asked us to accompany her to the service, where we (all seven of us!) sat beside her and shared in the accolades she received. However, the reforms to the Jewish liturgy to which we had become accustomed in the Liberal service of the Westendsynagoge in Frankfurt did not prepare us for the more radical departure from traditionalism observed at Adas Israel, and after a few months we moved to the Conservative Congregation Adath Jeshurun, which was more in line with what we had experienced in the Westendsynagoge. Consequently, Margot and I, who had been enrolled in the Adas Israel Religious School, moved over to the one at Adath Jeshurun, where I became a Bar Mitzvah after two years, and graduated along with Margot four years hence. I might add that as an adult I reaffiliated with the Reform movement, not because I had become attracted to its services, but because I was closer to its philosophy, which seemed to accept a broader range of personal beliefs. I have always felt that intelligent human beings might utilize their intelligence rather than follow a whole set of prescribed ideas across the board. But I have also learned that personal beliefs are very private and not necessarily characterized by religious affiliation.

The family's change of synagogue in no way affected our cordial relationship with Aunt Frieda, whom we visited often, and we in turn were visited by her son Louis when he was in town to see his mother. He liked to speak of his accomplishments, including his affiliation with the University of Chicago, where he taught a course in some department related to Near Eastern affairs. Noting that I was doing well in school, he pointed out that no depression or any other obstacle would hinder those at the top, where he obviously was, and, I felt, in a position to look down. The matter of the affidavit never came up, and we maintained good relations with the Mann family even after the death of Aunt Frieda, and later Louis, with Louis' wife Ruth continuing a correspondence with us.

I have never known which of our American relatives had produced the signature of an American citizen that was required to validate the \$10,000 trust fund that our Swiss relatives had put up for us. It could have been the Manns, or it could have been the Wolffs.

Hermine Wolff was the daughter of Babette Weiss, another of my grandfather's sisters, who lived on the same street in Essingen as my grandparents. It happened that Hermine, my mother's cousin, lived with her husband Harry in a house just one block away from our apartment. Our geographic proximity led to daily encounters between the families, especially in the summer, when the benches in front of the Wolff house represented an open invitation not only to us, but to the neighbors, in the age prior to the prevalence of air-conditioning in private homes (though available in stores and cinemas, perhaps accounting in part for the popularity with Margot and me of movies in the summer). Aunt Hermine was an agelessly beautiful woman

and a good conversationalist, and I enjoyed discussing the world's problems with her as well as with Uncle Harry. The latter was extremely helpful to our family by imparting the secrets of life in America to us. Uncle Harry had retired early, and lived well on his income from real estate, and enjoyed the culinary arts that were generally considered a feminine activity, at least when practiced in the home. My family thought him overly solicitous of his wife, who appeared to enjoy her leisure and to be negligent, in my family's view, of "women's responsibilities." They found it somewhat awkward that advice they might have expected from her came instead from her husband. Obviously my family's more traditional "old country" lifestyle could not quite accept the somewhat different one adopted by the American relatives.

The Wolffs had two children. The son, Ivan, was at the University of Wisconsin studying for his doctorate in chemistry. Ivan was the second chemist in the extended family, uncle Bertram having been the first, and I and my son David and my cousin James Loewenstein brought the number of (known) chemists in the family to five. Ivan later joined the Central Agricultural Research Laboratory in Peoria, Illinois, and eventually became Director of the Eastern Agricultural Research Laboratory in Philadelphia.

The daughter Erma was married to Nat Levy and they had a daughter Betty Jane (later just Betty when double names for girls became less fashionable). The Levys, like their parents, were very solicitous of us, and tried to be helpful in many ways to the newcomers. Betty Jane was a frequent playmate for Margot and me. Nat was a workaholic in his real estate business, which he tended until his death; he was very interested in politics, but even in my adolescent years he would consult me on the assumption that I was knowledgeable about these matters.

Much later, when I moved to Washington, he was convinced that I had the inside story.

7. The Family in Louisville

From 1938 until 1946 I lived with my family in the apartment previously described, on the third floor of 105 E.Caldwell St. I was actually a part of two family units, a smaller one – the Weiss-Eichhorn family – consisting of four individuals, and a larger 7-member unit that included the Preis family. Both of these units had family characteristics, the larger one held together first of all by occupying the same apartment, but aside from this geographical proximity there were strong ties between us that resulted in many family gatherings in which common interests were pursued. Although each of the family units was assigned certain rooms, we readily passed from room to room without regard to these assignments. The foyer that contained the radio was used by anyone who wanted to listen to the radio, and Uncle Erich, Margot and I frequently played card games on the Preis kitchen table. Although Margot and I had had close associations in Germany, when we lived not far from each other, the quasi-sibling relationship became even closer when we shared an apartment, and we spent much spare time in Margot's room playing board games. We particularly liked Monopoly, to which we had been introduced by Betty Jane in the Levy's home, and I went so far as to construct a Monopoly board along with the other appurtenances of the game, and assume that I did not break any patent laws in the process.

Margot and I have always remained close, although we have led quite different lives in different places. While I have spent much of my life in the Washington D.C. area, after sojourns in Illinois and Louisiana, Margot has remained in Louisville, where she is married to David Kling, the son of the Selma Kling who was so instrumental in welcoming our family to Louisville, and of Arthur Kling, who owned a wholesale business with his brother Morris, but whose major interest throughout his life was community service. He was instrumental in the

construction of the Jewish Community Center (JCC) where he served a term as President; and particularly in his later years he was dedicated to promoting the welfare of the elderly, spending a great deal of time commuting between Louisville and Frankfort, Kentucky's capital city, to lobby for legislation in behalf of the aged, leading my young daughter to wonder at the many transatlantic voyages he undertook – thinking he was going to Frankfurt, her father's birthplace. David followed in his father's footsteps, was also elected President of the JCC and has been very active in the community, and Margot herself has occupied a variety of positions in Jewish organizations in Louisville. Arthur once spoke to me of the deep roots that he had in Louisville, and these roots remained strong enough to hold Margot and David as well.

My Louisville roots were obviously not strong enough to hold me there, but I considered that city my adopted home town, where a great deal happened to mold my life.

The matriarch of the family in Louisville, as she had been in Germany, was my (and Margot's) grandmother, and that goes for the 4-unit as well as the 7-unit family, and in fact beyond, because my grandmother seemed to have taken it upon herself to weld together the various components of the extended family that reached many places in the U.S. and some in other countries, particularly Switzerland, England, and Palestine – later Israel. She possessed a strong personality tied to a strong religious faith and great human compassion. She was 74 on her arrival in the U.S. and lost little time before undertaking numerous visits to members of the Jewish community, especially the wealthy, to get them to understand the plight of the German Jews (and later of the other European Jews as they too came under the Nazi yoke) and to do everything possible to get them out. It is not difficult to understand that the Nazi horrors were

not fully comprehended in the U.S., when one remembers that it required some time for the German Jews themselves to become wholly aware of the direction the terror was taking. My grandmother never learned sufficient English for conversation, but she managed to communicate reasonably well in German with Yiddish speakers, or else relied on translations supplied by Uncle Erich and my mother (and occasionally even by me.) Her pleas were both general and specific; general in getting her listeners to think of relatives who were threatened and to help them, and specific in that she herself had names of individuals who required help. I remember particularly a sister-in-law of my grandmother's, whose pleas for help came from Camp-de-Gurs in Vichy France. My grandmother's attempts were in vain in this instance – the sister-in-law perished. It was simply too late for the U.S. quota numbers to come up in time. Until quite recently I had hoped that some of the other attempts had been successful, though I had no definite knowledge that any of them were. I have recently learned that my grandmother's efforts had in fact borne fruit in at least one instance; my cousin Ruth Zimmermann (née Bensinger) informed me that she and her family owed their lives in part to my grandmother's pleas with the owner of the Bensinger furniture store in Louisville. This man had been unwilling to provide the affidavit for their visa until my grandmother's persuasiveness convinced him.

Grandmother was an avid reader. She read two German-language newspapers, the daily N.Y. *Staatszeitung und Herold*, delivered one day late from New York, but keeping her (almost) up-to-date on the latest news, and the weekly *Aufbau*, a German-Jewish publication, also from New York, with a great deal of information about Jews who had come to the U.S. from Germany, thus enabling its readers to learn of each others' whereabouts and activities and frequently leading to reunions of old friends or relatives. (For this reason my mother retained the

subscription to the *Aufbau* after my grandmother's death.) Grandmother enjoyed novels; I remember her reading Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* shortly before her death in 1951.

During the years of no contact with Aunt Palmir and family after the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands not a day passed without grandmother praying for Aunt Palmir, usually after meals, and the front page of her prayer book contains the annotation, in her handwriting: "1946: On May 12 our dear Palmir came to us with God's help."

Grandmother's deep religious faith was not dogmatic. Our apartment on Caldwell St. was within walking distance of the synagogue, but when we moved further away from it, she used the streetcar to get there, though not without first obtaining Rabbi Gittleman's opinion on the matter.

I was not present when Grandmother died, but my mother told me of a remarkable deathbed legacy reminiscent of a scene from a play. All four of her children surrounded her and she exhorted them to shun discord and to be always good to each other, addressing each of the children separately. At the moment of her death she appeared to be meeting her father and mother and greeted them audibly. Those greetings, following the admonition to her children, were her dying words.

I have already written about my mother's life in Germany with my father and after the death of the latter, of her assuming to some extent the roles of both parents and of her struggles with Nazi officialdom. In the United States she readily and gladly took to many American ways while retaining certain modes of European behavior to which she had grown accustomed.

Mother's friends and acquaintances in the U.S. included fellow immigrants from Germany as well as native-born Americans. With the former her conversation remained in the German language, even much later when her fluency in English had come to equal that in German (though she never lost her German accent). The choice of language was not necessarily hers – it simply remained the prevailing form of communication among most of the immigrants. With Americans my mother would speak English as well as she could from the day of her arrival in the U.S. Since children acquire a new language more rapidly, I became fluent in English before my mother, and in our early years in the U.S. I would often speak to her in English while she addressed me in German, but as the years passed and Mother also became a fluent English speaker, we communicated orally entirely in English, though Mother continued to write family letters in German throughout her life.

Like my grandmother, my mother considered it one of her most important duties on her arrival in the U.S. to make it possible for others to come, and in her case Uncle Max and his family were on top of her list. She did in fact persuade Rabbi Gittleman to pledge the money required for the affidavit, a task perhaps not altogether to be cherished by one not previously accustomed to begging. Unfortunately her efforts proved to be in vain, their quota numbers did not come up in time to prevent their deportation to the death camps.

Upon my grandmother's death my mother (as well as my Aunt Hilda) attempted to assume the copious correspondence by which my grandmother had been instrumental in holding together our widespread extended family. In this task she was partially successful, but could not

completely prevent some of the slippage that is bound to occur in such a generational transition.

She was however eminently successful in one aspect of this endeavor. My mother had always considered it her responsibility to maintain the relationships with my father's family so that his death would not sever our contacts with my father's kin. Hence there has been much communication with my relatives in the Netherlands, and we have met on both sides of the Atlantic.

Strangely, we did not have contact with a branch of the Eichhorn family that had moved to the U.S. in the 19th century – we were quite unaware of them for decades. Eventually my mother discovered a Rabbi David Max Eichhorn, met him very briefly, and exchanged some letters with him, from which she learned that the Rabbi's father was a first cousin to my father. But it took another half century before I established real personal contact with this part of the family, beginning with Jonathan, son of David Max, who is also a rabbi, and my second cousin once removed.

My mother's activity was not limited to housework; she filled a full-time day-job at the Jewish Hospital in Louisville for many years. After retiring she became active in volunteer social work, particularly among the elderly, whom she taught various crafts that she had just recently acquired herself. She made such things as baskets of various types, with variations that became baby-doll cribs, matzot baskets, etc. Her activities were greatly appreciated, and she received recognition for them in the form of the Elsie Judah award given to the outstanding member of the Senior Club. She had always been adept at needlework, and a signature work of hers was a type of knitted doily such as I have never seen produced by anyone else, and which she made in many

sizes from as small as 4-5" in diameter to table cloth size. Mom's doilies still fill decorative niches throughout our present apartment.

I have indicated several times that my mother played a dual role in my life, that of mother *and* father, after my father's death. But there was an exceedingly important man in my life, my Uncle Erich, who did not quite become a father to me, mainly because I looked to my mother for parental guidance in what could be called morals and ethics, consisting essentially in helping me to determine what I should do about this and that in view of whatever circumstances had presented themselves. My mother expected to play this role for me, and Uncle Erich did not. But my uncle was many things to me that a father can be: he was my foremost adult male companion and friend, who accompanied me to many places that I could not have reached alone, geographical places as well as intellectual ones. Margot was often included but she did have a living father and I did not, so that the commitment to her was not quite the same, because in some ways at least Uncle Erich *was* some of the things to me that a father was expected to be.

So my relationship to Uncle Erich had a degree of ambiguity; he was not a father but carried out some of a father's functions. Such an ambiguity also existed in his relationship to my mother. He was certainly not a husband, yet he and my mother did have a give-and-take set of arrangements that resembled the traditional married relationship, in that my uncle was the principal bread-earner and my mother carried out responsibilities traditionally assumed by a wife, and perhaps most importantly, they shared the family income and were joint owners of all possessions of the household. My position in the family did somewhat resemble that of a child

with two parents. My grandmother was the honored matriarch, and all four of us of course shared the benefits of the household. I had no specific allowance, but always carried some cash which I used to purchase necessities. There was no need to teach me how to manage a budget – the household was on a shoestring budget and I had certainly learned to appreciate the value of money, and had no problems with money when I became more or less independent in 1947.

In essence my mother and uncle's relationship had many of the components of a conjugal one, but of course what is generally considered a main characteristic of such a relationship was lacking and in our highly moral family no compensation for this lack was possible and in fact it was quite unthinkable.

Uncle Erich's life was complicated by diabetes, which was diagnosed in 1936. He became accustomed to injecting himself with insulin and his diet was very carefully monitored at every meal, portions were weighed out to the gram until my mother was able to accurately estimate the quantities with the naked eye. My uncle was subject to occasional insulin comas which were treated by feeding him orange juice, after which he rapidly recovered. He accepted his deprivations without complaint and lived a very normal life until eventually he was blinded by diabetic retinopathy, and finally succumbed to diabetes-induced cardiovascular disease in 1971 at the age of 75.

My grandmother's daily prayers for Aunt Palmir were answered in 1945 by a telephone conversation with Uncle Bertram who called from Switzerland to announce that Aunt Palmir was

alive, having been liberated from the Theresienstadt concentration camp by Russian troops.

Unfortunately the conversation also conveyed the terrible news of the death of Aunt Palmir's two daughters and their husbands in the Nazi extermination camps. The combination of good news that was unfortunately countered fourfold by the bad naturally brought our household into emotional turmoil, yet there was nothing we could do about the children who were victims of the Holocaust, and we could only look forward to the reunion with the mother. The latter spent half a year with Uncle Bertram and Aunt Johanna in Lausanne, Switzerland, and we learned that she was in good physical health, and in fact exhorted Uncle Bertram not to let his aches and pains get the best of him. My Aunt Palmir had a steely constitution that could and did survive almost anything that tested it, and she could never understand how others could be less resilient than she.

Aunt Palmir's permanent home was to be with our family in Louisville, and she made her trip from Lausanne to Louisville in May, 1946, the major part of which was a plane trip from Geneva to New York, which at the time included stopovers in Shannon, Ireland, and Gander, Newfoundland. Uncle Erich took the train to New York to meet her at La Guardia Airport and accompany her on the train from there to Louisville. An interesting sidelight of this trip arose from our concern that she might encounter problems on the plane because of her lack of English. Uncle Erich therefore wrote to Senator Barkley (of Kentucky, later U.S. Vice President) explaining Aunt Palmir's circumstances to him and requesting that he write a letter explaining them to anyone on the plane in the event of communication problems, and Aunt Palmir was in fact able to carry with her a signed letter from the Senator, which I am sure helped to assuage some anxieties she may have had, though I don't remember whether she actually made use of the

letter during the flight. Apparently we had learned a bit about constituency services between the time of our encounter with the Mayor of Louisville in 1938 and Aunt Palmir's arrival in 1946.

We were all surprised at the good physical appearance and vigor that Aunt Palmir displayed, hardly what might have been expected of a concentration camp survivor, but it may be that the half year she had spent in Switzerland enabled her to overcome any ill effects of the experience.

As vigorous and mentally alert as Aunt Palmir was, the years of anxiety and mistreatment apparently did have its effects. The first and most obvious was her declaration that wherever the rest of the family would go, she would remain at home, having no desire to socialize or be entertained or in any other way communicate with the outside world. My mother spent many hours dissuading her from such monastic intentions, and I shall never know whether she really ever intended to become a shut-in or whether she expected to be talked out of it. I suspect the latter, although I doubt that she herself quite knew how she wanted to live and needed some assurance that, after her tremendous loss, she had the ability and the right to live a normal life. Well, whatever conflicts may have initially existed, she certainly lived a very active life thereafter. Her apparent rejection of the outside world is in fact totally out of line with her future life as well as of her behavior during her stay in Switzerland, as far as I can tell.

There was another darker side that I attribute to her mistreatment, and that was a continuing hostility toward some member of the family – not always the same person. It was manifested in her early years in Louisville by an antagonism toward Aunt Hilda that was not

demonstrated in the latter's presence but conveyed to the rest of us in her absence, sometimes quite vehemently. It is difficult to understand how my very gentle and compassionate Aunt Hilda could arouse such antagonism; she was subject to frequent headaches and other ailments, and I suspect that Aunt Palmir looked upon these things as a weakness that she could not stomach, since she herself was strength personified.

Even my grandmother, who had prayed so fervently for Aunt Palmir's survival and reunion with the family, was the object of some of this hostility. Grandmother at 82 was quite capable of working in the household and was accustomed to spending some time in the kitchen, but Aunt Palmir clearly did not want her there, making it clear that Grandmother's place was in the living room reading the newspaper. Of course Aunt Palmir's reaction in this instance can be understood in part by a genuine belief that work was detrimental to Grandmother, in part by her own need to occupy her niche in the household, but she seemed to have lost any ability to consider Grandmother's sensibilities. That being said, there is no question that she dearly loved her mother. She had been hardened by a life that had been extremely hard on her. There were no problems at all between Aunt Palmir and Uncle Erich and my mother, at least none that were then apparent to us. At the time Aunt Palmir appreciated my mother's strength. Much later, when mother weakened physically, disproportionately so when compared to her much older sister, the relationship deteriorated. Aunt Palmir could not tolerate others' inability to keep up with her own strength which she retained until a year before her death.

Among all the changes that took place in our lives when we came to the United States

there were of course circumstances that remained the same, and one of these was living in an apartment. It was not quite the same because the occupants in Germany of two separate apartments (actually three, when Aunt Palmir came into the picture) became the occupants of only one; nevertheless we did remain apartment dwellers as before.

As the family became established in Louisville and more and more cognizant of American ways, it did not escape their notice, and particularly that of Uncle Erich, that many of the neighbors lived in one-family houses instead of apartments and were owners of these houses. In Germany the Rothschilds had lived in property they owned; owning one's residence there was clearly a characteristic of the rich, while in the U.S. it was quite common. The difference in living standards as well as the lower U.S. prices probably accounted partly for this difference in lifestyle, but probably it also had to do with the ease with which relatively small sums of money could serve as a down-payment on a house, while the remainder of the value of the house was paid for in monthly installments thereafter. Uncle Erich came to recognize that these installments resembled the payment of rent for our apartment, with the important difference that the rent did not lead to ownership, whereas the mortgage payments did, and he asked himself therefore why we were "throwing away" this rent money when we could be purchasing a house that would for all practical purposes be ours when the down-payment was made, and the family by now had the means for making this payment.

It was at this point that we encountered what seemed to be a human difficulty in changing one's perception of people whom one had placed in one pigeon hole so that they could then not be mentally transferred to another.

My uncle's first action toward purchasing a house was to consult one of our relatives, Nat Levy, who was a real estate agent. To his great surprise my uncle got no support whatever from Nat, who instead expounded all of the advantages of apartment living and the manifold risks of a house purchase that could lead the family into the most dire financial difficulties.

As I have already mentioned, Nat and his family had been exceedingly kind and helpful to us ever since our arrival in the U.S., and they certainly meant well by us during all of this time, and I am certain that Nat was still attempting to do his best for us, as he saw it. But we had been categorized as "refugees" of whom certain things were expected and among these was renting an apartment. Owning a house just didn't fit, and I believe that Nat believed quite sincerely that it would not be in our best interest.

Well, without Nat's help and very much against his advice we bought a home at 2030 Confederate Place, and henceforth Nat who had opposed this purchase became quite reconciled to it, realizing that Uncle Erich had been right, and I suppose we were then taken out of the "refugee" pigeon hole and placed into one consistent with the ownership of a house.

Uncle Erich was in fact totally familiar with the risks as well as the benefits of the house purchase, and we found ourselves in possession of a very beautiful home obtained at a bargain rate. It fronted onto a small triangular park that permitted a view across it to the Speed Museum of Art, a building in the classical Greek style on the grounds of the University of Louisville. The house had three stories, and the ground floor featured artfully decorated parquet floors with

elaborate borders around the floor in each room.

The house, which was to accommodate only the Weiss-Eichhorn family, which now included Aunt Palmir as well as Grandmother, had a porch, foyer, living room and dining room on the first floor, 4 bedrooms and bath on the second floor, and 3 bedrooms and bath on the third floor, the latter rented to three men, not always the same men, but generally engineers from Latin America who interned at the Seagram factory not very distant from the house.

The Preis family bought another house two blocks away, so that we were no longer living together with them, but as had always been the case, we continued to live close enough together to make frequent visits easy to accomplish.

The move resembled somewhat the move from the East end of Frankfurt to the West end in that the new location was a “better” one in spite of the bargain price (\$8600 – not much even in 1946 dollars). Confederate Place was so named after a monument near our house on which Confederate soldiers were facing the “enemy” to the North. We never considered the implications of the street name and the monument; the significance of these appellations did not penetrate our consciousness. Does the name matter? Well, we would not have bought a house on Nazi Street, but that would have had implications for us that Confederate did not have.

I lived at the house on Confederate Place for only one year, from 1946 to 1947, when I permanently flew the coop. My grandmother died at Confederate Place, and her admonition to her children to keep the peace was perhaps inspired at least in part by evidence to the contrary

already noted and possibly premonition of more to come. But a peaceful and happy relationship did in fact prevail for the most part for a long time, whether or not it resulted from Grandmother's heroics on her deathbed.

8. Schools are Different

a) What was Junior High School?

Had it not been for the advent of National Socialism in Germany I would have attended the same school from the 5th to the 12th grade. In Louisville an entity called junior high school (grades 7-9) was interpolated between elementary (grades 1-6) and high school (grades 10-12). Further complicating matters, the physical plant of the school in my district, Monsarrat, was sufficient for only the 7th and 8th grades, so that for the 9th grade we had to hike to a more distant school, Louisville Junior High School, that was housed together with the Louisville Girls High School in a very large building called Halleck Hall. Since I was slated to advance by one school year, I also attended summer school for two summers, thus ending up spending 2 years at Monsarrat (1939-41), ½ year at Halleck Hall (fall semester 1941), summer school in 1941 and 1942, and entered Male in the spring semester of 1942, graduating in 1944.

At Monsarrat, I was introduced to a selective process that I had not previously encountered. The students in any given grade level were divided into sections, and this division was not random, but dependent on the supposed ability of the student. Thus, the seventh-grade at Monsarrat consisted of four sections, each designated by a letter identifying the teacher who presided at home-room, where attendance was taken at the beginning of the day. We students were not supposed to know the significance of the breakdown and how our section fit into it, but we did! And the school authorities and teachers apparently knew that we knew, and were not averse to occasionally let the cat out of the bag. I remember one instance when our home-room teacher prepared us for the placement of a student who had been in the “worst” class into our

“best” class by explaining to us that this particular student behaved in all sorts of inappropriate ways and was applauded for them by his present classmates, and it was hoped that our “best” class would not respond in this way and thus lead the student perhaps to modify his behavior. (He didn’t.)

I suppose that this student classification at Monsarrat was an example of the meritocracy that is a partner of democracy in the American system. And while recognizing the justification and importance of reward based on merit, I was nonetheless aware of the difficulty of assigning relative merit. The assignment may be completely objective when based on rigid criteria, which however can have greater or lesser validity. Or else it may have flexible criteria and become highly subjective. In the present instance, I have no idea what the basis of our classification was; since I was placed in the top category, I had no reason to be dissatisfied, but to my knowledge no student in any section (or parents) lodged any complaint about the classification, and I believe that no one was moved to another section, with the exception of the student with the behavioral problems noted above.

I have already alluded to what I consider a major difference in the course structure I experienced at the Philantropin and at the Louisville Junior High Schools. The difference can be readily ascertained from a comparison of subjects listed in the schools’ report cards. The one from the Philantropin listed, among other subjects, geography, history, biology, chemistry and physics. In my 5th grade report I was graded on all of these except chemistry and physics, which were not offered at the 5th grade level. The Louisville Junior High School report listed none of these, but substituted social studies and general science.

The rationale for the generalized courses is presumably to eschew the dispersal of knowledge into too many categories, so that interrelationships among various fields are not lost, as they could be if they are taken up separately. Thus history inevitably involves geography; so why not discuss them together? Similarly, the sciences are interrelated – the study of biology involves both chemistry and physics.

I believe that this rationale can lead to effective teaching when supported by the availability of textbooks *and* teachers who are familiar with the specific subjects encompassed in the generalized fields and are capable of getting the specifics across to the students in the context of the generalizations.

In my experience, and in my opinion, however, this generalized approach did not work well. In social studies we never did pay much attention to geography, and I would guess that my experience was not atypical, since surveys of American students have indicated a vast ignorance of geography among the general population. My memory of the social studies courses is that they were relatively strong in civics – certainly an important matter for students in training for participating in the affairs of their government. In general, though, the attempt to demonstrate interrelationships among fields produced ambiguous treatments of interrelationships among components that were themselves not well understood.

I have no better opinion of the success of the general science program, although the problems with this program were exacerbated by the infliction upon us of a teacher with a sadistic tendency that made her pounce upon students with questions that she knew they couldn't

answer, and who was given to repetitive ecstatic expostulations upon the wonders of Mother Nature, set to a musical score that I cannot reproduce here. We did learn tidbits of biology, chemistry, physics – tidbits says it all. In contrast, in the Philantropin we concentrated on biology in the 5th grade, with no attempt to incorporate the other sciences. This kind of specialization did not take place in Louisville until we entered high school, in the 10th grade.

Fortunately, from my perspective, not all subjects were taught as part of a generalized conglomeration. English including literature, and art and music were separate entities (though obviously one can demonstrate interrelationships there). I don't want to be misunderstood: I consider these interrelationships very important, but believe it best to understand individual components first and relate them afterwards. Mathematics was a separate subject, and we could opt for algebra (as I did). Foreign language was also optional, though Latin was the only one offered at Monsarrat; the small school lacked the capacity to provide more than one language. Had it not been for this circumstance I probably would not have taken Latin, since I had no intention of visiting a Latin-speaking country and was eager to travel to places where other languages were used. However, I have never regretted my study of Latin, which whetted my appetite for understanding interrelationships (here we go) among languages, and which allowed me to be taught by Miss Tockert, an excellent teacher, who did make us feel that in her class we did inhabit a Latin-speaking country.

I had other very good teachers at Monsarrat, and certainly learned a good deal there, in spite of the fact that I cannot help reflecting on the possibility that overall the system could have been better.

One characteristic of the American schools that I attended pre-high-school that differed

from the practice in Germany was that these schools were co-educational, while the German schools separated the sexes. However, such separation did occur for physical education, as expected, as well as in shop, required of and limited to boys, and cooking, needlework, etc., required of and limited to girls, also as expected at that time.

Such expectations have changed, as has much else, including the elimination of the junior high schools altogether in favor of the 3-year middle school, starting in the 6th grade.

b) Bringing teacher and students together

My arrival at Junior High School brought me into contact with a practice that differed from any I had encountered in Germany and in fact in the U.S., up to that point: the hourly movement, throughout the day, of entire classes from room to room.

If teachers are to teach and students are to learn it is obviously necessary to bring them together, and that task is accomplished in various ways. The simplest of these places one teacher and one class together for the day; that is a favorable arrangement in early schooling, where one teacher can be expected to be competent in virtually any subject at that level, and this method was indeed used in both *Holzhausenschule* and Engelhard. There were exceptions in both instances, with specialist teachers brought in for mathematics, gym, and religion in the former, and the march to assembly in the latter, but for the most part Herr Reinbold and Miss Marion remained with the class all day in the same room.

In the Philantropin each subject was taught by a specialized teacher. There the students

remained in the same classroom most of the day, with teachers coming to it to teach the subject of their primary competence, then departing, to be followed by the next teacher. This procedure involved an interregnum during which no teacher was present, and the students availed themselves of the opportunity to let off steam by creating a bit of pandemonium; one student was at the door to serve as a lookout for the incoming teacher, and as soon as the latter was spotted, all the students returned to their seats, and when the teacher entered, the room was quiet, with students in standing position and reciting “good morning, sir” with utmost solemnity. The system was not without flexibility, and the students did move to different classrooms, e.g. for music and art, to utilize specialized equipment. But on the whole, the students remained in place, and the *teachers* came to the *students*.

In the Junior High Schools that I attended in Louisville, courses were also taught by specialist teachers but teacher-student contact was achieved by the reverse of the procedure in vogue at the Philantropin – each teacher remained in his/her classroom throughout the day, and the *classes* were sent to the *teachers*. The Philantropin method appears to be the simpler; the movement of teachers produces much less traffic than the mass movement of students. The latter, however, gives the students a legitimate way to engage in some physical and social activity between classes and thus avoids the pandemonium in the classroom that occurred in the Philantropin. I suspect that the teachers there were not unaware of the situation, and perhaps intended it that way. But the American way seems less authoritarian and requires no empathy from individual teachers to give the students some needed breathing space.

At Male High School, each teacher remained in his classroom, but instead of being

visited by an entire class, each hourly session was attended by students from throughout the school who had elected the subject being taught by that teacher during that time period. This procedure is of course particularly suited to a system that permitted each student a great deal of choice in the selection of subjects.

c) From Junior High School to High School

In this matter of choice Male High School differed totally from any previous educational experience to which I had been subjected. I was the one who selected most of the courses that I took during the three-year period. The only required courses were English every year, one year of U.S. history in the 11th grade, and either gym or R.O.T.C.

The opportunity to select one's curriculum was thoroughly American; I believe that the Philanthropin, had it continued to exist, would have provided no such choices. But opportunity carried with it responsibility. I was faced with a multitude of decisions on what courses to elect, and these decisions all depended on a very major decision – what career would I follow after high school. It obviously made sense to select courses that were in line with a career choice rather than those that were not.

And that is where Junior High School was, after all, enormously helpful. At Halleck Hall I had taken a (required) guidance course, and it was there that we learned of the choices that we had to make in high school and of the potential relationship of these choices to a career pathway. And it was in this guidance course that I confronted these choices of career and course work,

since we were expected to outline the course work for the 3-year high school period before the end of the last junior high school semester. It is of course understood that these were not immutable decisions, and that the courses we had outlined could at any time be discarded in favor of other choices, just as we could revise our plans for a career. I had certainly always understood this possibility and I believe that our guidance teacher made this point quite clear. And yet, it was obvious that here was an opportunity to be seized, and if we could think far enough ahead, it would pay off in the long run.

And so in this important task junior high school prepared us for high school and beyond. The question then becomes, how well did the junior high school curriculum in general accomplish this task?

The design of courses at Male seemed to confirm my idea that the generalized junior high school (JHS) courses were less useful than they could be. I took courses in chemistry and physics, and the initial courses started from scratch, with no assumptions of previous knowledge whatsoever. So the chemistry and physics components of the general science course in JHS had no bearing on the high school courses; the latter were conducted as if there had been no course in general science. It could of course be argued that the previous exposure did serve as a sort of mental preparation for the high school courses, and there is no way to refute such a possibility. In my opinion the bits-and-pieces approach in JHS was of little or no help in high school; the teaching of the most elementary material was not accelerated.

Does the general science course benefit the student who never encounters a more

advanced and specific scientific curriculum? I suppose it could, if the selections are chosen for meaningful content and an understanding of scientific methodology, but at Monsarrat we were not that fortunate. Obviously, again, an outstanding teacher will get results that elude the ordinary teacher. And that goes for the student who goes on to greater depth in science as well as the one whose final brush with science is in JHS. But even so, wouldn't they all be better off with courses that demonstrate the excitement of science when specific portions of it are investigated in depth, rather than an intermingling that doesn't really reveal any of the substance of any of the sciences? It has always appeared so to me, but I am aware that the matter is controversial, and others have different points of view.

Did the JHS social studies program benefit us in high school and in life? It's hard for me to say, since the only High School social studies I took was the required U.S. history in the 11th grade. I did not elect World History, since a perusal of the text indicated that I knew this material, having read extensively in history books at my leisure. Later I did take "social science" courses in college, having recognized my deficiencies in this field, but I do not know whether the fault lay in a poor JHS preparation, or whether I would have been even worse off without the JHS social studies curriculum. I do remember with disfavor one perhaps illustrative instance of my JHS instruction in which we were asked to memorize the five (or six?, seven?) purposes of schools. I seem to remember that the list was a reasonable one but that I felt at the time that I could have devised other lists consisting of either more or fewer categories, and *memorizing* this particular list (which of course I have forgotten) seemed of no particular merit.

d) My American High School Experience

If I felt my junior high school experience somewhat wanting, I consider my high school experience highly satisfying.

Our apartment on Caldwell St. was one block from Male High School which was on Brook St., occupying a block between Caldwell and Breckenridge, a handsome turn-of-the-century (19th -20th) building with a large field behind it. The field was used most of the time for R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officer Training Corps) drills, and reminded me somewhat of my drills in the first and second grades in Germany, but only somewhat, because R.O.T.C. men were fully grown males wearing uniforms resembling though not identical to regular army uniforms. During the three-year period these cadets were promoted to non-com as well as commissioned officer ranks, the highest rank being colonel. I believe that the officer in charge was a colonel in the regular army. Since my attendance at Male (1942-1944) spanned most of the period of the American participation in World War II – and since the age at graduation was approximately 18, many of the graduates could expect to be drafted into the armed services upon graduation, and some of those who would graduate at 17 would volunteer for the service. The high-school R.O.T.C., unlike that a college, did not lead to a commission, but I assume that it affected advancement upon enlistment in the regular army.

As a result of this R.O.T.C. program, the dress of most of the Male boys during my tenure there was a military uniform. Those not taking R.O.T.C. were enrolled in gym classes, as I was for three years, having no choice in the matter, since R.O.T.C. was restricted to citizens and I was not a U.S. citizen, and did not become one until 1944. The uniforms on the majority of the boys made the school look like a military school, which it was for the “cadets” during their

R.O.T.C. period, but otherwise the school's curriculum was unaffected by the war.

I followed the course of studies I had outlined in the 9th grade on the basis of going into chemistry, with little deviation, since I was continuously happy with my choices of subject. These were heavily oriented toward science. I took all the chemistry and physics offered, 1½ and 1 year respectively, and also all the mathematics offered – a full three-year course, from advanced algebra to trigonometry. (Mathematics was later accelerated, and many years later my son took mathematics through calculus, but I believe that some subjects like solid geometry and aspects of advanced algebra were eliminated in his program.)

Since I had started Latin in Junior High, I elected Second Year Latin in my first year at Male, got the opportunity to read Caesar's account of the Gallic wars, learning at the outset what all of my predecessors in the study of Latin had learned – that Gaul is divided into three parts – and was then treated to Caesar's narrative of his generally victorious battles in some detail, and was quite bored, possibly because reading these accounts at the rate of a few paragraphs a day somehow did not sustain my interest. I remember my second year Latin mainly because of some characteristics of the two teachers who presided over the course.

Actually, the first semester consisted mainly of a synopsis of Roman life and customs and a brief history of Rome – Caesar's writings did not come until the second semester. The first semester was taught by a Mr. Cannon who appeared to my 15-year-old persona to be very old, with white hair, etc., and he had a very gentle speaking voice that seemed to go with the old-age perception. I remember this man principally for two asides that were pearls of wisdom to me

then and that I appreciate even now. The first occurred when we were reading about the Roman gods, and some snickering was audible from some of the boys. Mr. Cannon interrupted them, and said in his slow, measured tone: "How do you know that they're wrong and you're right?" This one- sentence pronouncement remains the briefest advocacy of open-mindedness and tolerance I have ever heard. The other pearl arose from his insistence on using a "j" in Latin words; the "book" used the version of Latin in which "i" represented a vowel as well as a consonant. Thus the word for now was "iam" in the "book" but "jam" when written on the board by Mr. Cannon. When someone challenged him on this spelling, he asked us to open the book to the title page and observe the name of the book's author, pointing out that a human being promulgated the "iam" version, just as he, Mr. Cannon, preferred the "jam" version. I.e., just because it's in print doesn't make it right. Mr. Cannon represented wisdom to me, more than Caesar, who was carrying out a mission unfortunately expected of leaders throughout history, and can at least be credited with being able to write it down in a way that kept people reading it 2000 years later, though he bored some of his readers, I being one of them.

When the actual reading of Caesar's work occurred in the second semester, it was taught by a man of lesser stature than that of Mr. Cannon. I remember him not for any wisdom, but rather for his susceptibility to the wiles of his students. This teacher was a firm opponent of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and considered his views on this subject at least as important as anything Caesar had said long ago. And the students baited him by bringing up some action of Roosevelt's that they considered or else pretended to consider laudatory. And that would set off a rebuttal by the teacher that could take up the rest of the hour, at the end of which the desired "same lesson for tomorrow" fell upon the ears of the appreciative class.

With apologies to Cicero and Virgil, I did not continue with Latin, having satisfied my curiosity about this source of so many languages extant today, and took up one of these, French. I have always admired this language for its mellifluous sound, and my brief study of it has enabled me to read it in uncomplicated texts and to speak it in uncomplicated situations, but to understand it in spoken form only in those rare instances when it is spoken slowly. I consider my inability to comprehend the French one of my life's failures, and greatly admire those who, like my wife, can readily converse in this medium. I still enjoy the sound, except when used by Parisian drivers whose cars have collided, although paradoxically, in that instance I understand their meaning perfectly.

The English that was a required subject at every high school level consisted generally of two parts: language (grammar, usage, composition) and literature. By the time I reached high school English was no longer a foreign language to me, and I even became somewhat annoyed at the relentless repetition – every year we had exercises in which we were expected to indicate what was wrong with the same phrases (example: “off of”), and many of these phrases I see misused in the best of circles – I keep seeing “less” when “fewer” should be used, and wonder whether all these people are really wrong, or whether the language has changed while I wasn't looking. Of course some of it has changed while I *was* looking. Sometime in the 1970s I noticed my secretary putting up lists of symposiums, memorandums, etc., and of course I knew from Latin that it should be symposia and memoranda, but before correcting the secretary, I consulted the latest dictionary, to discover that “iums” is the preferred form. There goes one of the reasons for studying Latin!

Of course the bookworm in me enjoyed literature greatly. In the 11th grade we had an overview of American literature, taught by Mr. Bradbury, who liked it even more, and never let us forget how much better writing was and how much more challenged students were in his student days. An avid baseball fan, he assured us that baseball players were also much better then! We could get extra credit in this class by reading other works by whatever author was being studied at the time and then reciting the gist of the work to him in the ten minutes before the class began. Since the same credit was allotted for any opus regardless of length, we generally chose something short, and he wouldn't fail to ask why we had selected a short story by Mark Twain instead of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," but we got the credit nonetheless.

Mr. Bradbury made me cognizant of the Atlantic Monthly, which he called "the best literary magazine," and years later this pronouncement led me to submit a humorous essay there, and imagined Mr. Bradbury's approval when it was published.

English literature was taken up in the 12th grade; it included "Hamlet" and Macbeth;" altogether we read four Shakespeare plays in the JHS - high school years. Excerpts from English literature were taken chronologically, beginning with "Beowulf." Mr. Tague had an excellent technique for teaching composition. He would place a few single-word titles on the board and ask us to write about the topic in 15 minutes, at the expiration of which period he would say: "when I say three, a-pass-'em in to me, a-1-a-2-a-3, a-pass-'em in to me, right now!" And we did, and I believe this was a good way to hone our writing skills.

Male had what is called a college-preparatory program, and Mr. Tague's 12th grade

English course was part of it. Selection of the college-prep program was completely voluntary.

There was more work to do and the grading was tougher, but there was more to learn at a higher level. I felt that this was the best way to select students – by letting them select themselves – better than at Monsarrat, where others decided for you (of course the younger students would have less capability of deciding where they would fit in). If a student chose the course that was beyond his capability, it was his own doing, though I believe it was correctable.

The importance of English was emphasized by the fact that grade level was indicated by the English level; thus the six high-school semesters were labeled from English 3 to English 8; you were an English 5 rather than a 1st semester 11th grader. (English 1 and 2 were taught in JHS in 9th grade.) The classification was convenient since all students were required to take English every semester.

The other required course was U.S. history, in the 11th grade, in which I had an absolutely outstanding teacher, Mr. Salyer, whose teaching goal was not to teach facts *per se* but in relation to concepts. For instance, the conflicting ideas of Jefferson and Hamilton were discussed at length, and many historical events were learned in this context. Mr. Salyer told us at the outset that we would not memorize dates and sequence of presidents, but that our activities would get us to know both at the conclusion of the course – and he was right. Meanwhile, my cousin Margot, taking what was supposedly the same course, was struggling with dates of civil war battles and similar paraphernalia. The two approaches seem to me almost a model of how to teach and how not to teach.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was president during this time. Though now accepted by most as one of the great presidents, at that time, though loved by many he was hated by quite a few. The controversy that evolved around FDR was the cause of a daily drama that played out during the latter part of this history course; one of the students argued strenuously against his policies, which were then defended by the teacher. Many years later I had lunch with this student, Bill Axton, and reminded him of this daily debate, and he informed me that he was reflecting his father's opinions in Mr. Salyer's class, and that he had long since recognized that "Roosevelt put us into the 20th century." An interesting reversal. For me Roosevelt represented the anti-Hitler, his fireside chats the antithesis to the ramblings of the "Führer," and of course the father-figure who led the country through depression and war. Later, of course, I became aware of the fact that the man had his flaws, some of them severe, but my basic feelings for him, and my belief in the importance of having someone like him in his position at that time, have not changed.

One course that I elected that did not fit my general program designed to lead to a career in chemistry was mechanical drawing. I probably took it because I enjoyed the very brief introductory course I had taken in JHS (required there for boys), and probably also because of my liking for mathematics and particularly geometry. This course possibly leads to a better appreciation of architecture, as well as a better understanding of artistic perspective. In general, though, my high school curriculum was very goal directed, with little sidetracking into the humanities and social sciences other than what was required. But I made up for that in college.

My Uncle Erich maintained an album of his nephew's accomplishments. One page of this album contains two pictures of me, one of them depicting me at the front of a column of four

boys (men?) who had obtained top scholastic honors at Male, with the caption “Gunther Eichhorn Sets Scholastic Pace for 216 Graduates.” The other shows me being “pinned with a No. 1 by runner-up Reginald Victor Bennett.” Both appeared in the Louisville Courier Journal. I was valedictorian of the class and Victor was the salutatorian.

The picture with the four students shows me with a wry smile, with mouth closed, as I was generally photographed. The second apparently caught me off-guard and I exhibited my toothy smile, revealing the misshapen upper teeth protruding over my lower lip. But this second picture appears more genuine, since it shows how presumably I really felt. For I cannot deny that I experienced a good deal of pride at this accomplishment. I had worked hard at my studies, which, far from being a burden, were always a pleasure to me, and there was really no other undertaking that I enjoyed more.

Nevertheless, as I have already mentioned, I consider numerical rankings of achievement to be arbitrary and partly a matter of luck; such ordering can be very subjective, or else highly objective using rigid criteria that may or may not reflect relative achievement correctly. In this case the rankings were based on grade averages. At any rate, I knew that I was “best” only by a rather rigid criterion, and was aware that many others were better than I when different criteria were applied. I am quite sincere about this, and yet preferred being first to being last, and even to being second. After all, I *was* last in football, baseball and basketball, and in those events second-to-last would have been an achievement.

The valedictorian and salutatorian (Victor Bennett) had a duty to perform – we were two

of the four graduates who delivered talks at the graduation; the other two were selected by a competition in which they submitted their written talks to be judged. I was somewhat aghast at the prospect of having to deliver my lengthy address to an audience that filled the Louisville Memorial Auditorium. No notes were allowed (or perhaps it was so assumed, and none of us used them) and I memorized the speech word for word. Later I learned to speak extemporaneously, but this address was delivered from rote memory. I began my talk with a heart rate in the stratosphere (just normal beats, though, no PAT) but it decelerated as the talk progressed with no mishap.

I did not win the prize for best speech, which went to one of the speakers chosen through the competition. Before delivering the speech I had shown it to Mr. Salyer who informed me that it was a good essay but not really a speech. So I owe a bit more gratitude to Mr. Salyer for teaching me the difference. But it was too late to write anything else. I did receive another award that was of much greater importance to me, the Pierce W. Atwood Scholarship in the amount of \$900, which, at the 1944 valuation of the dollar and with my living at home, probably more than paid my way through college at the University of Louisville. I believe that Mr. Bradbury was the head of the committee for the award of this prize. It was a boon to my family, still counting pennies, that I could essentially pay my expenses while at the University of Louisville from this scholarship (which was later supplemented by another award directly from the University).

e) Segregation by Gender and Race

The name proclaims it! “Male” is for boys. In Germany I had of course become

accustomed to segregation by gender, but Male High was the first all-boys' school I attended in the U.S.

Male was not the only boys' school available to the male students in Louisville. There was its arch-rival (in football) Manual (Du Pont Manual Training School) that sounds like a trade school, but wasn't – many of its graduates went to college, though unlike those at Male, they tended to move into the engineering schools. There was in fact a trade school – for those who would seek jobs requiring manual skills – Ahrens Trade School. And there was a Catholic High School, St. Xavier, and Central High, a school for blacks (then Negroes).

Girls went to several high schools in the city, among them the Louisville Girls High School at Halleck Hall that my cousin Margot attended.

The racial segregation in the school system, when taken together with other racially related characteristics, reflects the ambivalence of the “border state” of Kentucky. Not everything was segregated in Louisville; blacks and whites sat together on streetcars and busses – at least they were permitted to do so. Blacks and whites worked and shopped together. But segregation existed in many places; there were three large public parks and some smaller ones for whites, and one medium-sized park for blacks.

I was only dimly aware of segregation in my first years in Louisville. In most situations I encountered only whites – in school, for instance – and when I did encounter blacks it was in the non-segregated places like stores and public transportation. In retrospect, it surprises me that this

practice of segregation, so similar to my experience in Germany though without the final dreadful result, did not enter much into my thinking. I suppose it was partly explained by my lack of exposure to segregated facilities, and perhaps partly by my enthusiasm for my new country, which I believed to be all “good,” as it of course was to me, especially in comparison to what came before.

I remember very distinctly the point at which I suddenly did become poignantly aware of racial segregation and was deeply shocked by it. I had occasion to go to the Union Station in Louisville (now defunct) and observed that there were two sets of drinking fountains, labeled “white” and “Negro,” and four sets of restrooms, labeled “white men,” etc. Why I was so shocked by this phenomenon, when I knew about segregation before, seems peculiar. I believe the reason is that this was my first actual experience with segregation. I knew of the Negro park, but I didn’t see it. I did see the drinking fountains and visualized, e.g., whites approaching a fountain, noticing the “Negro” sign, and scurrying off to find the “white” fountain. Suddenly I became aware of the ludicrousness of it all, of its humiliating aspect for those deemed inferior who could not therefore share facilities with their purported superiors, and above all the similarity of the treatment of blacks to that of Jews in Germany. From that time on I became keenly aware of every aspect of segregation, though it was only much later that I would be able to exert any influence at all in this matter, and even then in only small measure.

9. Education Outside the School

I contributed to our income during the summers of 1943 and 1944 by working as a drug store clerk, where I earned 50¢ an hour, and learned some practical matters that were not in textbooks, at least not the ones I was privy to. When a customer asked me for rubbers I assumed that he meant to cover his feet, and did not think that we had that kind of thing in stock, but Mr. Lesch, the druggist, informed me that the intent was to cover a somewhat smaller part of the anatomy. I may have been on the way to being class valedictorian, but in 1943 there were subjects in which I was way behind.

The following year, in the brief interim in 1944 between high school graduation and college enrollment, I worked in what was called a dispensary, run by non-pharmacists who sold over-the-counter medicine but no prescription drugs. They also sold liquor, and in the pursuit of that part of the business I learned some other practical matters with which I had been previously unfamiliar. During the war the well-known and desirable brands of liquor were not readily available, and were kept “under the shelf” and dispensed to favored customers. Lesser, unknown brands, whose purchase was required along with the “goodies,” were displayed on the shelf in the order of increasing price. When an unknowledgeable customer asked for a bottle of liquor, he/she was told: “we have everything from, say, \$1.45 to \$3.95, and the customer would purchase the selection at either end, depending on whether he/she was interested in price or presumed quality. The proprietor had priced the best of the unknown brands in the intermediate range, and so they were not wasted on the naïve. Fortunately, because of my age I was not permitted to sell alcoholic beverages, and learned the ways of business from observing the

proprietors, who informed me that they did not enjoy playing this game, but when you come to think about it, it was the best way of satisfying most if not all of the customers. And I thought about it, and could not help but agree, but that didn't mean that I liked the procedure in which the unknowledgeable customer was intentionally misled. For that matter I wasn't really convinced that the criteria used to determine which liquor was best were really valid. The major criterion was the ratio of aged liquor to distilled spirits, and was it really certain that the higher that ratio, the better the taste would be? In this way I had learned about shady business practices – well, somewhat shady – in which some rather honest and well-meaning people felt they were forced to engage. There was of course an alternative – not to sell liquor.

10. The War

The substitution of alcoholic beverages of lesser quality for the premium products was for most people one of the less important consequences of World War II. I have already mentioned other effects of the war, such as the predominance of R.O.T.C. students in the Male High student body.

World War II had started in Europe in September, 1939, as I was beginning my Junior High School studies at Monsarrat. The U.S. then declared its neutrality by Act of Congress and President Roosevelt pursued his balancing act of lip service to neutrality while making it clear that his sympathies were with the Allies, and to these sympathies was added active support, such as the transfer of fifty American destroyers to the British navy.

I knew of no one in my environment at school or elsewhere who was not on the Allied side and who did not consider the Nazis a threat to the U.S. and the world, though the extent of the threat was not fathomed, and formal U.S. neutrality represented the popular will. There were, however, some dissidents in the U.S. in favor of Nazi Germany – particularly the “German-American Bund,” which held rallies sporting the Nazi flag along with the Stars and Stripes, a most incongruous combination. These folks had the support of one prominent American, Charles Lindbergh, who had been impressed by the prowess of the *Luftwaffe* and had accepted a medal from Hermann Goering himself. There was the *America First Committee* and a number of antisemitic rabble-rousers, but these groups and individuals constituted a minimal proportion of the American populace, and there was no question that Americans on the whole

were on the side of the Allies, though, of course, “neutral.”

I was 14 years old and in my last Junior High School semester (at Halleck Hall) when the formal neutrality of the U.S. was shattered on December 7, 1941, by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which was followed on December 11 by Hitler’s declaration of war on the U.S. The country’s production efforts ere converted virtually overnight to the production of war materiel – tanks, ships, planes, guns – to serve not only the U.S. military, but those of the Allies, including the Soviet union. The U.S. became the “arsenal of democracy” as well as whatever nondemocratic entity was on our side. The consequence to the civilian population with its love of automobiles and its dependence upon them was that these seemingly indispensable objects ceased to be manufactured, and although cars already in circulation continued in use, gasoline supply was scarce and driving speed was limited to 35 mph.

There were of course many other shortages, some more, some less important. Potentially much more serious than the shortage of premium alcoholic beverages which I witnessed in my work at the drug dispensary was the shortage of food, since a great deal of it was shipped overseas to provide for the needs of the military, and not only of the U.S. but of its Allies as well. Ration books were introduced, and food items required the payment not only of money but of food stamps that had to be removed from the ration books.

Volunteers were required to perform many war-related tasks and I remember participating in such functions, e.g., the distribution of ration books, which of course involved a great deal of bookkeeping and appeared to put us student into a sort of official capacity. I felt

rather important sitting behind a desk and graciously (I hope) dealing out the means of livelihood to people waiting in line.

And yet, with all these and many more restrictions, the impact of the war on the civilian population of the U.S., as opposed of course to the effect on the military personnel, was incomparably less than on the civilian population in other parts of the world, those that were subjected to armed invasion on the ground or bombing from the air. The impact on my family and me has to be measured against our experiences in Germany before our immigration into the U.S. and when considered in this light, it was almost negligible. Shortages existed in Germany before the war, since the Nazis were stockpiling resources in preparation for it. Though we were officially enemy aliens, we were treated with respect in this country and not with the contempt and the threat to life itself that we had endured on the other side of the ocean. We had many friends among native-born Americans as well as among other German-Jewish immigrants and even some non-Jews of German extraction – my Uncle Erich belonged to the *Socialer Maennerchor* which sang German songs, and its members, unlike those of the German-American Bund, were fiercely loyal to the U.S. My uncle was the choir's secretary and when it came to investigations by the U.S. government it may well have been in the choir's favor that its secretary was a Jew who had been expelled from Germany.

11. No Longer Man Without a Country

A rather important event occurred shortly before my high school graduation. My mother and Uncle Erich became U.S. citizens on February 11, 1944. The five-year permanent-resident requirement for citizenship in actual practice turned out to be almost six years because of all the paper work involved. My mother and uncle were also required to pass an oral examination that would determine their competence in the English language as well as some knowledge of American history and government. They studied for this examination, making use of sample questions, some of which I found very reasonable, others trivial, such as: in what city was Washington inaugurated as president? (I might ask in what city this question was formulated) and still others perhaps puzzling: who is the real ruler of the U.S.? The desired answer – the people – of course made an important point, perhaps the most important point desired to get across to the new citizens, and as long as they had seen the answer before the examination, they should have no difficulty remembering it, but basically it seemed to me to be a trick question.

Since I was underage I acquired citizenship along with my mother. However, that circumstance depended on the fact that my father was deceased and that he had been married to my mother at the time of my birth. To prove my citizenship required my parents' marriage certificate, my birth certificate, my father's death certificate, and possibly several other documents, and all of these were submitted by my mother, so that on October 13, 1944, I received my certificate of derivative citizenship, retroactive to the date on which my mother had become a citizen.

Thus ended our status as "enemy aliens," and we now had all the privileges and

obligations of U.S. citizens but one – we were still excluded from the presidency by the Constitution. But we could vote (and listen to shortwave radio). There was no change in liability to the military draft, since permanent residents, enemy alien or not, were subject to it. The change in status did not really affect our lives in any significant manner, since our reasons for coming to the U.S. were known to the authorities, and we had never been subjected to any kind of mistreatment in the previous status. But emotionally the change meant a great deal – we were now among the real rulers of the U.S.